

FRONTISPIECE.



The Sylph Husband?

Vol. 3. page. 1.

Published by Verner & Hood, & other Proprietors. Jan 7 1860.

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MORAL TALES,

BY

M. MARMONTEL.

VOL. III

A NEW EDITION.

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MORAL TALES

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME III



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The Syrian Museum
LACRATA
A View of Ten Thousand
Remains out to the East
The Museum of the Orient





THE SYLPH HUSBAND.

W. Sharp del.

MORAL TALES.

THE SYLPH-HUSBAND.

“**A**VOID the snares of men,” we are perpetually saying to young women: “Avoid the seductions of women,” we are perpetually saying to young men. Do we think we are following the plan of nature, by making one sex the enemy of the other? Are they formed only to hurt each other? Are they destined to fly one another! And what would be the fruits of these lessons if both sexes should take them literally?

When Elisa quitted the convent to go to the altar to espouse the Marquis de Volange, she was thoroughly persuaded that, next to a lover, the most dangerous being in nature was a husband. Brought up by one of those recluse devotees, whose melancholy imagination paints to itself all objects in black, she saw nothing for her in the world but rocks, and nothing but snares in marriage. Her soul, naturally delicate and timid, was immediately blasted by fear; and age had not yet given to her senses the happy power of conquering the ascendant of opinion. Thus every thing in marriage was to her humiliating and painful. The first assiduities of her husband, far from encouraging her, alarmed her the more. "It is thus," said she, "that the men cover with flowers the chains of our slavery. Flattery crowns the victim; pride soon prepares to sacrifice it. He consults my desires now, in order to oppose them eternally hereafter. He would penetrate into my heart, in order to unfold all its recesses; and if he discovers any foible in me, it is by that very foible that he will take care to humble me with more advantage. Let us guard ourselves well against the snares which they spread for us!"

It is easy to foresee the bitterness and coldness which this unhappy prejudice created on the

the side of Elisa, in their most intimate commerce. Volange perceived the repugnance which she had for him. He would have endeavoured to have conquered it, had he guessed the cause; but the persuasion that he was hated discouraged him; and in losing the hope of pleasing, it was natural enough for him to lose the endeavour.

His situation was the more painful, as it was quite opposite to his character. Volange was gaiety, gallantry, complaisance itself. He had considered his marriage as a jolly festival, rather than a serious affair. He had taken a wife young and handsome, as we choose a divinity, in order to raise altars to her. "The world will adore her," said he, "I shall lead her thither in triumph. I shall have a thousand rivals; so much the better! I shall eclipse them all by my assiduities, my vows, and my homages; and the inquietude ever attached to a jealousy, delicate and timid, shall preserve the love of Elisa from the negligences of the husband."

The impatient and disdainful coldness of his wife destroyed this illusion. The more he was in love with her, the more he was hurt by the distance which she observed towards him; and that love, so tender and pure, which would have formed his happiness, was likely to be his torment. But an innocent artifice of

which chance gave him the first idea, re-established him in all his rights.

The sensibility of the soul must exert itself; and if it has not a real object, it creates a fantastic one. Elisa's repugnance was founded in a settled notion, that there was nothing in nature worthy to attach her. But she had found in fiction something to engage, to move, to melt her. The fable of the Sylphs was in vogue. Some of those romances, in which is represented the delicious commerce of those spirits with mortals, had fallen into her hands; and these brilliant chimeras had in her eyes all the charms of truth.

In short, Elisa believed in Sylphs, and burnt with the desire of having one. We must be able at least to form to ourselves some notion of what we desire: and it is not easy to form a notion of a spirit. Elisa had been obliged to attribute all the features of a man to the sylph which she desired. But for the mansion of a celestial soul, she had composed a body at pleasure; a shape, elegant and noble; a figure, animated, interesting, ingenious; a complexion, of a bloom and freshness worthy of the sylph that presides over the morning star; eyes fine, blue, and languishing; and I know not what of aerial in all the graces of his person. To all this she had super-added a vesture, the lightest imaginable, formed of ribands, colours

colours the most tender, a tissue of silk, almost transparent, in which the Zephyrs sported; two wings like those of Cupid, of whom this beautiful sylph was the image; such was the chimera of Elisa; and her heart, seduced by her imagination, sighed after her own fiction.

It is natural for our most familiar and most lively ideas to recur in sleep: and the dreams of Elisa soon persuaded her that her chimera had some reality.

Volange, very sure that he was not beloved by his wife, had in vain observed her with the eyes of jealousy; he saw her with her own sex gay and gentle, easy and affable, and sometimes even with an air of friendship; but no man had yet met with such a reception from her as could alarm him. With that sex her countenance was severe, her air disdainful, her whole behaviour cold; she spoke little, scarce vouchsafed attention to what was said, and when she did not seem tired, she appeared quite out of patience. To be at her age neither tender nor a coquette! inconceivable! However, at last she betrayed herself.

The opera of Zelindor, at its first appearance, had the most brilliant success. Elisa was present at the representation in her own little box, with one of her women, for whom she had a great partiality. Justina was her confidante, and nothing attaches a timid soul

so much as having once surmounted the difficulty of unbosoming itself. Eliza would fain have had this confidante of her weakness perpetually with her; and her little box at the theatre was so dear to her, only on account of the liberty it afforded them of being there together, and alone.

Volange, who from the opposite side of the theatre observed all the movements of Elisa, saw her several times start at the sight of Zelindor, and talk to Justina with an air of passion.

A strange uneasiness possessed him; but in the evening, having found Justina a moment alone, "Your mistress," said he, "seemed highly entertained at the play?"—"Ah! Sir, she is distractedly fond of it: Zelindor is her passion. It seems to have been made on purpose for her. She is not recovered of the surprise into which she has been thrown by seeing her own dreams represented."—"What! does your mistress dream of such things?"—"Alas! yes, Sir, and you are much to blame to reduce her to the pleasure of dreaming. Indeed, you are very happy, that young and handsome as she is, she confines herself to the loving of sylphs."—"Sylphs?"—"Yes, Sir, sylphs. But I am betraying her secret."—"You jest, Justina?"—"A fine jest, indeed! Indeed, Sir,

“ Sir, it is a shame to live with her as you do.
“ Ah! when I see so young a lady, when she
“ wakes, her complexion blooming, eyes
“ languishing, with a mouth fresher than a
“ rose, telling me, with a sigh, that she has
“ just been happy in a dream; how I pity
“ her! and how I hate you!” — “ What d’ye
“ mean? Your mistress had in her husband an
“ uncommon lover; but she has returned the
“ highest tenderness of love only with a cold-
“ ness almost amounting to aversion.” —
“ You fancy so, you have mistaken timidity
“ for coldness; and that’s always the way
“ with the men. They have no pity on a
“ young woman. Why should you grow
“ cool? Why not make use of your power
“ over her?” — “ That is what has restrained
“ me. I was unwilling to owe any thing to
“ constraint, and I should have been much
“ warmer in my instances, had she been more
“ free in her refusals.” — “ Alas! poor gentle-
“ man, how good you are with this delicacy
“ of your’s! You shall see how vastly they
“ are obliged to you for it!” — “ Harkye,
“ Justina, a thought has just struck me,
“ which, if you will but assist me, may recon-
“ cile us.” — “ If I’ll assist you!” — “ Eliza
“ is in love with sylphs; I may personate a
“ sylph in love with her.” — “ And how will
“ you make yourself invisible?” — “ By vi-
“ siting

“siting her only by night.”—“Well, that’s
“a good scheme enough.”—“It is not very
“new : more than one lover has availed him-
“self of it ; but Elisa does not expect it, and
“I am persuaded will be deceived. The chief
“difficulty is the opening the first stage of the
“plot ; but I depend on your address to fur-
“nish me with an occasion.”

An opportunity was not long in presenting itself. “Ah ! Justina,” said Elisa, the next day on waking, “what happiness have I just
“enjoyed ! I dreamed that I was under an
“arbour of roses, where the most beautiful
“of the celestial spirits sighed at my knees.”
—“How ! Madam, spirits sigh ! and how
“was this beautiful spirit made ?” — “It
“would be in vain for me to endeavour to
“describe what has not its image among
“mankind. When the idea is effaced by my
“waking, I can scarce re-trace it to myself.”
—“But I may know at least what passed at
“your conference ?” — “I don’t know what ;
“but I was transported, I heard a ravishing
“voice, drew in the sweetest perfumes, and
“at my waking all vanished.”

Volange was informed of his wife’s dream, and in her regrets he thought he saw the means of beginning to act the sylph towards her.—
At that time essence of roses was scarce known in Paris : Volange put into Justina’s hands a
small

small phial of that precious elixir. "To-morrow," said he, "before your mistress wakes, take care to perfume her bed with it."

"O heaven!" said Elisa on waking, "is it still a dream? Come here, Justina, smell, and tell me what you smell!" — "I, Madam? I smell nothing." — "Nothing! do you not smell roses?" — "You grow distracted, my dear mistress, pardon me for saying so. Your dreams might be passed over, but quite awake! Indeed I do not conceive you." — "You are right, nothing is more inconceiveable. — Leave me! draw the curtains. — Ah! the smell is still more prevailing." — "You alarm me." — "Hark ye! I told you yesterday, if I remember right, that I was sorry that the dream of the arbour was dissipated, and that I was delighted with the fragrance I had breathed there. He has heard me, my dear Justina." — "Who, Madam?" — "Who! don't you know? You put me out of patience. Leave me! But he should know, as he is present, that it is not the flowers that I regret. — Ah! how much sweeter was his voice! How much more did it touch my heart! And his features, his divine features! Un-availing wishes! Alas! I shall never see him." — "Why really, Madam, there is

show

“no great probability.” — “You throw me into despair ; is it love to envy me, even to want to destroy the most pleasing illusion ? for that it is one, I must believe ; I am not a child.—And yet this fragrance of the roses !—Yes, I perceive it, nothing is more real ; and it is not now the season for those flowers.” — “What would you have me say to you, Madam ? All the desire I have to please you cannot make me believe a dream to be a reality.” — “Very well, Mademoiselle, don’t believe it. Prepare my toilette, that I may dress. I am in a confusion, in an emotion at which I blush, and which I know not how to appease.”

“Victory, Sir,” said Justina, on seeing Volange : “the sylph is announced and desired ; we wish for him ; let him appear ; and take my word for it he will be very well received.”

Elisa was plunged all the day in a reverie, which had the air of an enchantment : and in the evening her husband perceived that she waited with impatience the moment of going to deliver herself up to sleep. There was a communication between their apartments, according to custom, and Volange had agreed with her confidante on the method of getting without noise to his wife’s pillow. But it was necessary, that either by a sigh, or by some words

words which were to escape, she should herself invite him to speak.

I forgot to mention, that Elisa would not have any light by her in the night; not without reason. The pictures of the imagination are never so lively as in profound darkness. Thus Volange, without being perceived, espied the favourable moment. He heard Elisa sigh and seek repose with inquietude, "Come then," said she, "happy sleep, thou alone makest me love life." "It is for me," said Volange, in a voice so soft that Elisa scarce heard him, "it is for me to call upon sleep: I am happy only through him: it is in his bosom that I possess you." He had not time to finish. Elisa gave a loud shriek, and Volange having disappeared, Justina ran up at Elisa's voice. "What is the matter, Madam?" "Ah! I die: I have just heard him. Recall me, if possible, to life. I am loved, I am happy. Make haste, I cannot breathe." Justina hastens, unties her ribands, gives her some salts to smell, which revive her, and still supporting her part of being incredulous, reproaches her for delivering herself up to ideas which disturb her repose, and affect her health. "Treat me, as a child, as a fool!" said Elisa. "But it is no longer a dream, nothing is so true; I heard him as plain as I hear you." "Very well, Madam, I will not put you out of
"patience; ;

“patience : but endeavour to calm your spirits : remember that, in order to please a sylph, one must be handsome, and that we soon become otherwise without sleep.” —
“Going, Justina ? How cruel ! Don’t you see that I tremble all over ? Stay at least till I sleep, if it be possible to sleep in my present agitation.”

At last her fine eyes grew heavy, and it was resolved between Justina and Volange, that scared by the cry which Elisa had made, the sylph should in vain be wished for the next night. Accordingly, she called upon him in vain.

She was afraid he would never return more. “My cries have frightened him,” said she. —
“Good Madam,” said Justina, “is a spirit so fearful then ? And ought he not to have expected the fright which he put you into ?
“Be easy : he knows what passes in your heart, as well as yourself. And perhaps at this moment he is listening.” “What say you ? You make me start,” “How ! are you not very glad that your sylph reads your soul ? — “Assuredly : nothing passes there with which he has not reason to be pleased.
“But there is always something of man intermingled in the idea which we form of sylphs, and modesty.” — “Modesty, in my opinion, is out of the case with spirits. Where would be the harm, for example, in engaging him
“to

“to return this evening?” — “Ah! it would be vain to dissemble; he knows very well how much I wish it.”

Elisa's wish was accomplished. She was laid down, the light put out, and Volange at her bed's-head. “D'ye think he will return,” said she to Justina? — “Yes, if he be gallant he must be here already.” “Ah, if he could but hear me!” “He hears you,” replied Volange with a soft voice: “but, remove this witness, who gives me uneasiness.” “Justina,” said Elisa, trembling, “get away.” — “What now, Madam? You seem moved.” — “Nothing; leave me, I say.” Justina obeyed, and as soon as they were alone, “What then,” said the sylph, “does my voice fright you! It is not usual to fear what we love.” “Alas,” said she, “can I see without emotion my dreams thus realised, and passing, by an inconceivable prodigy, from illusion to reality? Shall I believe that one of the celestial spirits deigns to quit the heavens for me, and to be familiar with a mere mortal?” “If you knew,” replied Volange, “how much you efface all the charms of the nymphs of the air, you would be but little flattered with your conquest. Nor is it to vanity that I would owe the reward of my passion. That passion is pure and unalterable as the essence of my being;

"being; but it is delicate also to excess. We
"have only the sensations of the soul: you
"have them as well as we, Elisa; but in
"order to relish their delights, you must
"reserve for me that soul of which I am
"jealous; amuse yourself with all that the
"world has interesting and amiable; but love
"nothing in it like myself." "Alas! it is
"very easy for me to obey you," said she, in
"a voice still faltering. "The world has no
"charms for me. My soul, even when un-
"occupied, could not give access to vain
"pleasures which would seduce it: how can it
"be accessible then, now that you possess it?
"But you, O spirit celestial and pure, how
"can I flatter myself with fixing you, and
"being able to content you?" "Learn,"
replied Volange, "what distinguishes us from
"all the spirits dispersed through the universe,
"and still more from the human species. A
"sylph has no happiness in himself: he is
"happy only in what he loves. Nature has
"forbid him the power of loving himself
"alone; and as he partakes of all the pleasures
"which he excites, he feels also all the pains
"which he occasions. Fate has left me the
"choice of this half of myself on which my
"happiness is to depend; but, that choice
"decided, we have no longer but one soul,
"and it is only in rendering you happy, that
"I can

"I can hope to be so." "Be happy then," said she to him with transport, "for the mere idea of an union so sweet, ravishes me, and lifts me above myself. What comparison between this intimate commerce and that of dangerous mortals, whose slaves we are here!" "Alas, you know that I have submitted to the laws of Hymen, and that they have imposed fetters on me." "I know it," said Volange, "and one of my cares shall be to render them light." "Ah!" resumed she, "be not jealous on that account. My husband is perhaps the man in the world who has the least tincture of the vice of his species: but they are all so conceited and so proud of their advantages, so indulgent to their own faults, and so rigorous to ours; so little scrupulous as to the means of seducing and making us slaves, that there would be as much imprudence as weakness in delivering ourselves up to them." "Well," said her sylph, "would you believe it? All that with which you reproach the men, do we reproach the sylphids. Soft, insinuating, fertile in evasions, there is no art which they do not employ to domineer over the spirits; but once sure of their power, a capricious and absolute will, an imperious pride, to which every thing must bow, take place of timidity, gentleness, and complaisance;

“plaisance; and it is not till after having
“loved them, that we perceive we ought to
“hate them. This prevailing character,
“which nature has given them, has however
“its exceptions: it is the same among the
“men. But be that as it may, my dear Elisa,
“both the one and the other world will be
“strangers to us, if you love me as I do you.
“Adieu: my duty and your repose oblige me
“to quit you. Heaven has confided to me
“the care of your star; I am going to direct
“its course. May it diffuse over you the
“most favourable influence.” — “Alas! go-
“ing so soon!” — “Yes, in order to see you
“again to-morrow at the same hour.” —
“Adieu:—but no, one word more. May I
“have a confidante?” — “You have one,
“confine yourself to her. Justina loves you,
“and she is dear to me.” — “What name
“shall I give you in speaking to her about
“you?” — “In heaven they call me *Valoë*,
“and in the sylphid language that name sig-
“nifies *all Soul*.” — “Ah! I merit the same
“name since I have heard you.” The sylph
then vanished. Elisa’s heart swam in joy, she
was at the summit of her wishes, and in the
midst of the delicious ideas which possessed
her, sleep seized her senses.
Justina was informed of every thing that
had passed, and had no need to repeat it to
Volange.

Volange. She only acquainted him that he had left his wife in an enchantment. "That is not enough," said he: "in the sylph's absence, I would have every thing recall his passion to her. You read her soul, you know her likings; instruct me in her wishes: the sylph will have the air of divining them."—In the evening, Elisa, to be the more at liberty, went to walk alone with Justina, in one of those magnificent gardens which are the ornament of Paris: and though she was there wholly taken up with her sylph, an inclination, natural to young women, made her cast her eyes on the dress of an unknown lady. "Ah, what a pretty gown!" cried she to herself; and Justina pretended not to hear her. But the adroite attendant, having heard the name of this lady who was so well dressed, remembered it, and told it to Volange.

The hour of rendezvous being come, Elisa goes to bed, and as soon as she is alone, "Ah! my dear Valoé," said she, "have you forgotten me! Here am I alone, and you come not!" "He waited for you," said Volange: "your image has followed him into heaven. He has seen only you in the midst of all the aerial court. But you, Elisa, in his absence, have you wished only for him?"—"No," said she to him assuredly, "nothing
" but

“but you interests me.” — “I know, how-
“ever, Elisa, that you have formed a wish
“that was not for me.” “You make me un-
“easy,” said she; “I have examined myself
“in vain, I know not what that wish can
“be.” “You have forgot it, but I remem-
“ber it, and far from complaining of it, I
“wish that you may often have the like. I
“have told you the sylphs are jealous, but it
“only renders them the more earnest to please.
“Do not be astonished to see me curious of
“the smallest particulars of your life : I
“would leave in it only the flowers, and re-
“move the smallest thorn. For example,
“your husband ceases not to give me uneasi-
“ness. How are you with him ?” “Why,”
said Elisa, a little confounded, “I live with
“him as with a man ; in that diffidence and
“fear which a sex born the enemy of ours
“naturally inspires. They gave me to him
“without consulting me ; I followed my duty,
“and not my inclination. He said he loved
“me, and he would have pleased me, that is,
“have captivated me : he has not succeeded ;
“and his vanity, which he calls delicacy,
“has diverted him from his design. Thus
“you see we are good friends ; or, if you
“please, both of us free.” — “Is he at least
“a little complaisant ?” — “Why, yes, suffi-
“ciently to seduce a woman who did not
“know

“ know so well as I, how dangerous men are.”
—“ You might have fallen into worse hands :
“ and this husband is not so troublesome as
“ his sex generally are. He does well as to
“ the rest : and if ever you should have cause
“ to complain of him, he shall be punished
“ for it instantly.” “ Oh no, I conjure
“ you,” said she, trembling, “ though he
“ should totally neglect me, never interfere
“ in it. I owe you all my confidence : but
“ it would be a cruel abuse of it, to do him
“ any manner of hurt. He is unhappy enough
“ in being a man, and it is a sufficient pu-
“ nishment.” — “ Your soul is celestial,
“ charming Elisa ; a mortal did not deserve
“ you. Listen ; I have not told you our
“ manner of punishing the men. They
“ know only fire and sword : but we have
“ gentler methods of vengeance. When-
“ ever your husband shall have displeased you,
“ you shall inform me of it ; and from that
“ instant, regret, reproach shall seize his soul,
“ and he shall have neither peace with me,
“ nor with himself, till he has expiated at
“ your knees the displeasure he has occasioned.
“ I will do more, I will inspire into him all
“ that you inspire into me. Thus the spirit
“ of your sylph shall animate your husband,
“ and shall be present to you without ceasing.”
“ That,” said Elisa, transported, “ is the
“ only

“only way of making me love him.” Thus passed this last conversation.

The day after, Elisa being at her toilette, Justina cast her eyes on the sophia in her closet, and sets up a cry of astonishment. Elisa turns about, and sees there displayed a gown like that which she had seen in her walk. “Ah! see now in what manner he avenges himself of a wish not formed for him! Justina, will you believe me at last? Is not a sylph to be adored?” Elisa’s eyes could not weary themselves in admiring this new prodigy.—Volange arrives in that moment. “There’s a beautiful gown!” said he, “Your taste, Madam, does great honour to what you love. I think,” continued he, examining the stuff nearer, “this is made by the hands of fairies.” This familiar manner of speaking came out so à-propos, that Elisa blushed as if she had been betrayed, and her secret revealed.

In the evening she failed not to extol the forward gallantry of her handsome little sylph; and he in his turn said to her a thousand things, so delicate, and so tender, on the happiness of embellishing what we love, and of enjoying the good which we do, that she was perpetually repeating it: “No, never mortal knew such language: none but a celestial being can speak and think thus.” “I acquaint
“you

“you, however, before-hand,” said he, “that
“your husband will soon become my rival.—
“I take a pleasure in purifying his soul, in
“rendering it as gentle, as tender, as flexible
“to your desires as his nature permits. You
“will be a gainer by it without doubt, Elisa,
“and your happiness is wholly mine: but
“shall not I be a loser?” “Ah! can you
“doubt,” said she, “that I shall not attri-
“bute to you all the care he shall take to
“please me? Is he not like a statue which
“you endeavour to animate?” — “Thus
“you will love me in him; and in thinking
“that it is I who animate him, you will take
“a pleasure in rendering him happy.” —
“No, Valoé, that would be to deceive him:
“I hate falsehood. It is you that I love, not
“him: and to testify to him what I feel for
“you, would be to deceive both.” Volange,
not to engage any further in so delicate a dis-
pute, changed the subject, and asked her how
she had amused herself all the day. “Hey!”
said she to him, “do not you know, you who
“read my thoughts? The moments in which
“I was disengaged, I employed in tracing
“out a cypher, in which our two names are
“entwined. I draw flowers pretty well, and
“I never did any thing with so much taste as
“those which form that kind of chain.”
“You have also,” said he to her, “a rare
“talent

“talent which you neglect, and the pleasures
 “of which are heavenly: you have a touch-
 “ing voice, an exquisite ear, and the harp
 “under your fingers, mingling its accords
 “with your sounds, would form the delight
 “of the inhabitants of the air.” Elisa pro-
 mised to exercise herself in it, and they parted
 more taken, more enchanted with each other
 than ever.

“I am often alone,” said she to her hus-
 band; “music would amuse me. The harp
 “is in fashion, and I have an inclination to
 “try it.” “Nothing so easy,” said Volange,
 with an air of complaisance: and that very
 evening she had an harp.

The sylph returned at his hour, and ap-
 peared charmed with seeing her seize and fol-
 low his ideas with so much vivacity. “Alas!”
 said Elisa to him, “you are more happy, you
 “divine my wishes, and know how to prevent
 “them. How precious is the gift of reading
 the soul of the person we love! We don’t
 “allow time to wish. Such is your advantage
 “over me.” “Console yourself,” said Va-
 loé to her, “complaisance has its value: I
 “fulfill my own wishes when I prevent yours;
 “and you, in waiting for mine, have the
 “pleasure of telling yourself that it is my
 “soul guides you. It is more flattering to
 “prevent; but it is sweeter to comply. My
 “advantage

“ advantage is that of self-love ; yours is that
“ of love.”

So much delicacy was to Elisa the most charming of all ties. She would fain have never ceased to hear a voice so dear ; but, out of tenderness to her, Volange took care to withdraw as soon as he had gently moved her, and sleep came to calm her spirits.

The first idea which she had at her waking was that of her sylph, and the second that of her harp. It was brought to her the evening before, quite plain, and without ornaments. She flies into her cabinet, and finds a harp decorated with a garland of flowers, which seemed freshly gathered. Her joy was equal to her astonishment. “ No,” said she, “ no ; “ never has the pencil in the hand of a mortal “ produced this illusion.” And what doubt but this was a present from her sylph ? Two brilliant wings crowned this harp, the same, without doubt, which Valoé played on in the celestial choir. While she was returning him thanks, the musician arrives, whom she had sent for to give her lessons.

Timotheus, instructed by Volange in the part which he was to perform, opened with an encomium on the harp. “ What fulness, “ what harmony in the sounds of this fine instrument ! What could be more soft, more “ majestic ? The harp,” if we might take
his

his word for it, "would renew all the prodigies of the lyre. But the triumph of the harp," added this new Orpheus, "is when it supports with its symphonies the accents of a voice melodious and tender.— Observe too, Madam, that nothing discovers to more advantage the graces of a fine hand and arm; and when a lady knows how to give her head an air of enthusiasm, so that her features grow animated, and her eyes kindle at the sounds which she occasions, she becomes half as beautiful again."

Elisa cut short this encomium, by asking her master whether he was a defendant of Timotheus, Alexander's musician. "Yes, Madam," said he, "of the same family." She took her first lesson. The music-master appeared enchanted with the seraphic tones of the harp. "Divine!" cried he. — "I warrant it," said Elisa to herself.—"Come, Madam, try these harmonious strings,"—Elisa applied to them a timid hand, and every note that she drew from the instrument thrilled to her very heart. "Wonderful, Madam," cried Timotheus, "wonderful! I hope soon to hear you accompany your touching voice, and set off my music, and my verses." "You make verses then too?" demanded she, smiling. "Ah! Madam," said Timotheus,

Timotheus, "that is the strangest thing in
 "the world, and I can scarce conceive it my-
 "self. I had heard that we had a genius,
 "and I took it for a fable; but upon my
 "word nothing is more real. I had one, I
 "who now speak to you, and I had him with-
 "out knowing it. It was but yesterday
 "evening that I had fresh confirmation of it."
 —"And how did you make this discovery?"
 —"How? last night, in my sleep, my genius
 "appeared to me in a dream, and dictated the
 "following verses:

"The empty honour I renounce
 "To guide thy car, Aurora!
 "No more, no more will I announce
 "Thy sweet return, oh Flora!
 "Me now employs a gentler, happier care;
 "To guard my waking, guard my sleeping fair,
 "In vain Aurora weeps, in vain
 "Would Flora bind me in her rosy chain:
 "With dear Elisa will I stay,
 "Elisa fairer—fairer far than they.

"What!" said Elisa, with much emotion,
 "what Timotheus, did you make these
 "verses?"—"I, Madam! I never made any
 "in my life. It was my genius that dictated
 "them to me. He has done more: he has set
 "them to music, as you shall hear.—Well,
 VOL. III. C "Madam,"

“Madam,” said he, after having sung them, “how do you like them? Is it not happy to have a genius like mine?” — “But, Sir, don’t you know at least who this Elisa is, whom you celebrate?” — “Why, Madam, I believe it is a name like Phillis, Chloris, or Iris. My genius pitched upon that, because it is agreeable to the ear.” — “So, you do not pique yourself upon understanding the meaning of the verses which you sing?” — “No, Madam, but that is no matter: they are melodious, and full of sensibility, and that is enough for a song.” “Let me beg you,” resumed she, “to repeat them to nobody else, and if your genius should inspire any more, pray re-serve them for me.”

She expected her sylph with impatience, in order to thank him for the inspiration. He denied them; but so weakly, that she was but the more convinced. He confessed, however, that it was not without reason that those men were regarded as inspired, who without reflexion, produced fine thoughts. “These are,” said he, “the favourites of the sylphs, and each of them has his own particular one, whom he calls his genius. It is no wonder, therefore, that Timotheus should have one; and if he inspires him with verses which please you, he may boast of being
“ next

“next to me the happiest of the inhabitants of the air.” The genius of Timotheus became every day more fertile, and every day Elisa was more sensible of the praises he bestowed on her. However, Volange prepared her a new surprise, and the following was the object of it.

The reader remembers that she amused herself in tracing out a cypher, in which the name of Valoé was interwoven with her own. One day being invited to a feast, she was preparing to put on her diamonds : she opens her casket, and what does she see ? her bracelets, her necklace, her aigrette, her ear-rings, mounted after the pattern of that very cypher which she had drawn. Her first sensation was that of embarrassment and surprise. “What will Volange think ? What will he suspect ?” While she was yet at her toilette, enters Volange, and casting his eyes on her jewels, “Ah !” said he, “nothing can be more gallant. My name and yours in the same cypher ! I should be very much flattered, Madam, to suppose that this were a stroke of sentiment.” She blushed instead of feigning ; but in the evening Valoé was chid. “You have exposed me,” said she, “to a danger at which I tremble even yet : I have seen the instant wherein there was a necessity for me either to deceive my husband, or to

“ give him the most humiliating opinion of
“ me; and although the advantage which the
“ men draw from our sincerity authorises us
“ to use dissimulation, I perceive that in mak-
“ ing use of that right, I should be ill at ease
“ with myself.” Valoé failed not to commend
her delicacy. “ A little lie,” said he, is
“ always a little evil, and I should be sorry
“ to have been the occasion. But the resem-
“ blance of the name of Volange to mine had
“ not escaped me, and I knew that your hus-
“ band would go no farther than appearances.
“ I have began by rendering him discreet :
“ that is the first good quality in a husband.”

The whole winter had passed away in gal-
lantries on the part of the sylph, and on the
side of Elisa in emotions of surprise and joy,
which bordered on enchantment.

The first, and the most beautiful of the
seasons, the time in which we enjoy nature,
arrives. Volange had a country-house. “ We
“ will set out whenever you please,” said he
to his wife ; and though he had said this in the
handsomest manner, and in the sweetest tone
of voice, she perceived very well, she said, that
this invitation carried in it the imperious will
of a husband. She confided her pain to
Valoé. “ I don’t see,” said he to her, “ any
“ thing painful in what he has proposed to
“ you. Nothing attaches you to the town,
“ and

“ and the country is at present a delicious
“ abode, especially to a soul sensible and be-
“ nevolent as yours. We there see in nature
“ the first efforts of her bounteous inclination ;
“ and the care of making mortals happy, re-
“ news itself there under a thousand forms.
“ The forests crowned with a thick verdure,
“ the orchards in bloom, the corn springing
“ up, the meadows enamelled, the flocks
“ newly recruited and bounding with joy at
“ the first sight of the light ; all concur to pre-
“ sent us in the country the images of bounty.
“ In winter nature shews herself under an
“ aspect threatening and horrible ; in autumn
“ she is rich and fruitful, but she groans to un-
“ burthen herself, and her liberality afflicts
“ her ; even in summer she sells her gifts, and
“ the sad image of excessive labour joins itself
“ to that of abundance. It is in spring, that
“ nature is gaily prodigal of her riches, and
“ fond of the good she is doing.” “ Alas ! ”
said Elisa, “ Nature is beautiful, I grant ;
“ but will she be so to me, in that very place
“ where I connected my fortunes to those of a
“ mortal, where I took an oath to be devoted
“ to him, where every thing will recall the
“ humiliating remembrance to my mind ? ” —
“ No,” replied the sylph, “ nothing, my
“ dear Elisa, nothing in nature is humiliating,
“ but what is contrary to her ordinances. —

“ The perfection of a plant is to flourish and
“ bud : the perfection of a woman is to be-
“ come a wife and a mother. If you had op-
“ posed the wisdom of this design, you would
“ not have received my vows.” “ What !”
said Elisa, “ can a pure essence, a celestial
“ spirit, love in me that which degrades me
“ beneath him !” — “ Be what you are, my
“ dear creature : I love you as a sylph : and
“ it is not of your senses that I am jealous.—
“ Let your soul be fair and pure, let it be de-
“ voted to me, that is sufficient. As to what
“ are called your charms, they are submitted
“ to the laws of mortals : one of them possesses
“ them ; let him dispose of them ; far from
“ complaining, I shall rejoice at it, for one of
“ your duties is to render him happy.” —
“ Ah ! give me time, at least, to accustom
“ myself to this way of thinking. In the
“ country we see one another oftener : I shall
“ familiarise myself, perhaps, to that duty.—
“ But prithee do not abandon me !” — “ I
“ shall be there with you perpetually. I love
“ peace and silence.”

There was at this country-house a savage
and solitary place, which Elisa called her wil-
derness, where she used to retire to read or
think at her ease. Scarce was she arrived there,
when she went to it ; but all was changed.—
Instead of her seat of moss, she found a throne
of

of turf, interspersed with violets growing in festoons and love-knots. This throne was shaded with lilies, which over-arched the sweet-briar, formed the circuit of it, and mingled with the odour of the lilies the most delicious perfumes.

Elisa's first care, at her return, was to thank her husband for the attention which he had shewn in embellishing her little hermitage. "It is, I suppose," said he, "a piece of gallyantry of my gardener: I am much obliged to him for having thought of it." "Hilary," said Elisa on seeing the gardener, "I am obliged to you for having made so pretty an arbour for me." "Arbours, Madam!" said the sly rustic. "Yes, yes, I have enough to do to think of arbours truly! I am hardly able to go through the labour of my kitchen-garden. If they would have arbours, and well kept up, they must allow me more hands."—"At least you have not neglected mine, and this fine bower of lilies, with that hedge of sweet-briar, enchants me."—"Oh! the lilies, the sweet-briar, and all that, thank God, comes of itself, and without any trouble of mine."—"What, in earnest then, have not you touched it?"—"No, Madam, but that is nothing; and if you please, after the rising of the sap, I will give it a few cuts with the pruning-knife."

“knife.” — “And this turf, interspersed with
“violets, was it not you that cultivated it?”
— “Tróth, Madam, not I: neither turf nor
“violets will do for your table, and my gar-
“den takes up enough of my time without all
“these fineries.”

Elisa, after this discourse, no longer doubted
that the metamorphosis of her wilderness into
a delicious arbour, was the work of her sylph.
“Ah!” said she, in her transport, “this shall
“be the temple to which I will repair to adore
“him. I flatter myself he will be present
“there; but will he be for ever invisible?”

He came in the evening, according to cus-
tom. “Valoé,” said she to him, “my ar-
“bour is charming. But, shall I tell you?
“To complete its beauty, you must perform
“one final prodigy, and there render your-
“self visible to me. That alone is now want-
“ing to my happiness.” — “You demand of
“me, my dear Elisa, a thing that depends not
“on myself. The king of the air sometimes
“grants that favour to his favourites; but it
“is so rare! And even when he grants it,
“he prescribes the form which they shall take,
“and he generally prefers the most fantastic,
“in order to amuse himself.” “Ah!” said
Elisa, “so I do but see you, no matter under
“what form.” He promised her, therefore, to
solicit

solicit that favour, with the most pressing instances.

“At present,” said he to her, “how passed your journey?”—“Why, very well. My husband prattled with a gaiety that was natural enough; and I can easily discover the effect of the trouble which you take with him. But it is in vain that the natural imperiousness of the men bends a little, it still keeps its spring: one may temper, but cannot change it, at least not without long habitude.” “Let us not despair of any thing,” said Valoé, “I have a deal of power over his soul! What do you propose doing to-morrow, my dear Elisa?”—“I shall bathe in the morning.”—“I will come to see you bathe, if possible, and I will pass a moment with you.”

On Elisa’s waking in the morning, word was brought her that the bath was ready.—She went there with the faithful Justina: but as the sylph was to come to see her, and modesty is always timid, she would not have the curtains drawn, and scarce admit any light into the room.

Elisa enters the bath, and in a pannel opposite to her, her eyes perceive some confused features. This was the portrait of Elisa painted beneath glass, and which Volange had caused to be put there instead of a looking-

glass: a striking delusion, but easy to be produced, by means of a groove made in the partition, through which silently slid, by turns, the looking-glass and the picture, one after another.

In this picture, Elisa was exalted on a cloud, and surrounded with aerial spirits, who presented her with garlands of flowers. At first she took what she saw for the reflexion of the opposite objects; but in proportion as, with an eye more attentive, she discovers what strikes her, surprise succeeds to mistake. "Justina," said she, "let in some light. Either I dream, or I see.—O heaven!" cried she, as soon as a sufficient degree of light was thrown on the picture, "my image in that glass!"—"Why, Madam, I see mine there too. Where is the wonder, that one sees one's-self in a looking-glass?"—"Come here yourself then, come here, I say. Is that the effect of a looking-glass?"—"Certainly."—"Certainly! this cloud, these flowers, these genii, and I in the midst of that celestial circle, borne in triumph through the air!"—"You are not well awake yet, Madam, and no doubt but you are finishing your dream in the bath."—"No, Justina, I don't dream; but I see that picture is not made for your eyes. O, my dear Valoé, it is you that have

“ have painted it. How ingenious is your tenderness !”

Elisa's eyes were for a whole hour fixed on the picture. She expected her sylph; but he came not. “ He has but just passed by,” said she, “ and in that homage has declared himself. But, what will my husband say? How shall I explain this prodigy to him?” “ Ah! Madam,” said Justina, “ if this picture be not visible to my eyes, why should it be so to his?” — “ Right: but I am so confounded!” . . In saying these words, she lifts up her eyes, and instead of the picture which she had seen, she finds there only the looking-glass. “ Ah! I am easy,” said she: “ the picture is vanished. My amiable sylph will not give me the slightest uneasiness. — And how should I not love a spirit wholly occupied with my pleasures and repose?”

Impatient of knowing the success of her request, she pretended in the evening to be fatigued with walking, and to have need of sleep. The sylph did not make her wait. “ I know not,” said he, “ my dear Elisa, whether you will be content with what I have obtained. I am permitted to appear to you.” — “ Ah! that is all that I desire.” — “ But what I foresaw is come to pass. The king of the air, who reads our thoughts, has prescribed to me the form which I am to take,
“ and

“and that form is guess.” — “I cannot tell, put me quickly out of my pain.” — “Your husband’s.” — “My husband’s !” — “I have done every thing in the world to obtain a form which should please you more ; but it was impossible. He threatened to withdraw his boon from me, if I was not content ; and, reduced to this alternative, I liked that better than nothing.” — “Very well, and when shall I see you ?” — “To-morrow, in your little wilderness, at sunset.” — “I shall be there, for I depend on you.” — “You may without doubt.” — “And yet you promised to come to see me this morning. I received the most gallant homage from you. But it was you that I expected.” — “I was not far off ; but intimidated by the presence of Justina . . .” — “Ah ! I was wrong, I ought to have sent her away. But you shall have no more reason to blame me on that account, and I shall be alone in the arbour.”

This assignation did not fail to give Volange some little uneasiness. “She delivers herself up to me,” said he. “Shall I avail myself, to try her, of the illusion into which I have thrown her ? It would be very pleasing to me to attempt her, if I was sure that she would resist ! But if I were so sure of that, I should have no need of trial. Fatal curiosity !

“ riosity ! Let me consider : let me see which
“ is the less dangerous way. Ought I to clear
“ it up to myself, or remain in doubt ? In
“ the first case, doubt leaves me in a cloud :
“ and can I answer for my thoughts ? Perhaps
“ when it shall be too late to justify her, I
“ shall do her the injury to believe that her
“ imagination being seduced would have tri-
“ umphed over her virtue. I shall then re-
“ proach myself in vain, and the evil will be
“ without remedy. If, on the contrary, I try
“ her, and she resist, I am too happy. But
“ if she yield ! . . . Well, if she yield, I shall
“ think that the virtue of women is not able
“ to hold out against spirits. Yes, but that
“ spirit is clothed with a body, and though
“ that body be mine, no thanks to Elisa.—
“ What a labyrinth ! On entering into it I
“ foresaw every thing, except the means of
“ getting out. Let me deliberate no longer ;
“ let me repair to the harbour ; and the occa-
“ sion shall determine me.”

Volange, without pretending to observe Elisa, did not suffer one of her movements to escape him. He saw her dress herself with a modesty full of grace, and the decency she mingled in her attire re-encouraged him a little. He remarked also, that she wore all the day an air of sweetness, and a serenity which announced an innocent joy.

However,

However, the impatient eyes of Elisa measured the course of the sun. At last the happy moment approaches, and Volange, whom she had seen set out in a hunting-dress, repairs first to the arbour in the most elegant habit.

Elisa arrives, perceives him at a distance, and the emotion it excited in her, almost makes her faint away. He flies to meet her, reaches out his hand to her, and seeing her trembling, seats her on her little throne of turf.

Elisa recovering her spirits, finds her sylph at her knees, "What!" said he to her, "was it fear that the sight of me was to inspire into you? Did I not spare you the surprise of it? Did not you desire to see me? Are you sorry for it, and would you have me disappear?"—"Alas, no! punish not me for an involuntary weakness. Joy and tenderness have a greater share than terror in the disorder you now occasion." "I tremble," said Volange to himself: "she is softened; a bad beginning! Ah! my dear Elisa, why was I not free to choose among mortals him whose figure might have pleased you most; and how ill at ease is a lover under the form of a husband!" "That is the same thing," said she, smiling. "It would have been more agreeable to me, I confess, to have seen you under the image of one of these flowers
" which

“ which I love, or of one of those birds,
“ which, like you, are inhabitants of the air ;
“ but as a man, I had as lief see you under
“ the features of my husband, as those of any
“ other person. You seem to me even to set
“ it off. It is, indeed, Volange that I see in
“ you ; but your soul gives to his eyes some-
“ thing, I know not what, that is celestial.—
“ Your voice, in passing through his mouth,
“ communicates it to a charm perfectly di-
“ vine ; and in his action I perceive graces
“ which never body animated by a mere
“ mortal possessed.” — “ Well then, if you
“ love me such as you now see me, I can al-
“ ways be the same.” — “ You enchant me.”
— “ Shall you be happy then ?” added he,
kissing her hand. Elisa blushed, and withdrew
the hand which he had seized. “ You for-
“ get,” said she, “ that it is a sylph, and not
“ a man that I love in you. Valoé is to me
“ only a spirit, as Elisa is to you only a soul ;
“ and if you have not been able to take the
“ figure of a mortal without changing the
“ purity of your essence and of your love,
“ quit that degrading form, and make me not
“ blush any longer at the imprudence of my
“ wishes.” “ Very well !” said Volange,
in a low voice : but I now touch on the
“ critical moment.

“ Elisa,

“Elisa, it is no longer time to feign. I have done what you desired; but learn what it costs me.” “I consent to it, (said the king of the genii to me) obey the laws of a woman, become man; but flatter not thyself with having his sensations only in appearance. Thou art now going to love like other mortals, and to feel the pleasures and pains of it. If thou art unhappy, come not groaning and troubling the air with thy complaints. I banish thee from the heavens till the moment wherein Elisa shall have crowned thy wishes.” “I hoped to prevail on you,” added the sylph, “or rather I meant to comply with you; I submitted to that severe decree. Judge then, whether I love you, and whether you ought to punish me for it.”

This discourse drove Elisa to despair. “O thou most imprudent, and most cruel of aerial spirits,” cried she! “What have you done? And to what extremity do you reduce me?” Volange quaked at seeing his wife’s eyes filled with tears. “Why did you not consult me?” added she. “Was it for my shame, or for your punishment, that I desired to see you? And whatever that desire was, could you think that it could overcome what I owe to you and what I owe to myself? I love you, Valoé, I re-
“peat

“peat it to you ; and if there needed nothing
“but my life to repair the evils which I do
“you, you should no longer have cause to
“complain. But my virtue is dearer to me
“than my life and my love.” Volange
leaped with joy. “I cannot blame you,”
said he, “for an excess of delicacy ; but see
“how much I resemble Volange : it is almost
“he, or rather he himself, who falls at your
“feet, who adores you, and demands of you
“the reward of the most faithful and ten-
“derest passion.” — “No, it is in vain that
“you resemble him, you are not he, and it is
“to him alone that the reward which you
“demand is due. Arise ; depart from me ;
“and see me not again all your life. Leave
“me, I say ; are you mad ? What is that in-
“sulting joy which I see sparkling in your
“eyes ? Would you have the audaciousness to
“hope yet ?” — “Yes, I hope, my dear Elisa,
“that thou will live only for me.” — “Ah !
“this is the height of outrage.” — “Hear
“me.” — “No, I will hear nothing.” — “A
“single word will disarm thee.” — “That
“word then must be an eternal farewell.” —
“No, death only shall separate us : behold thy
“husband in thy sylph. Yes, it is Volange,
“whom you hated, that is this Valoé whom
“you love.” — “O heaven ! . . . But no, you
“impose upon me by the resemblance.” —
“No,

“ No, I tell thee, and Justina is witness that
“ the whole affair is but a jest.” — “ Justina !
“ She is my confidante.” “ She has helped
“ me to mislead you : she shall assist me to
“ undeceive you.” — “ You ! my husband !
“ can it be possible ? I tremble yet, finish, tell
“ me how these prodigies were performed.” —
“ It is love has wrought them all, and you shall
“ know by what means.” — “ Ah ! if it be
“ true !” . . . “ If it be true, my Elisa, can you
“ believe that there is in the world a man
“ worthy to be loved ?” — “ Yes, I will be-
“ lieve that there is one, and that it is I who
“ possess him.”

Justina being interrogated, confessed all,
and was obliged to take her oath that Valoé
was none other than Volange. “ It is now,”
said Elisa, throwing herself into the arms of
her husband “ it is now that I am enchanted,
“ and I hope that nothing but death alone
“ will break the charm.”

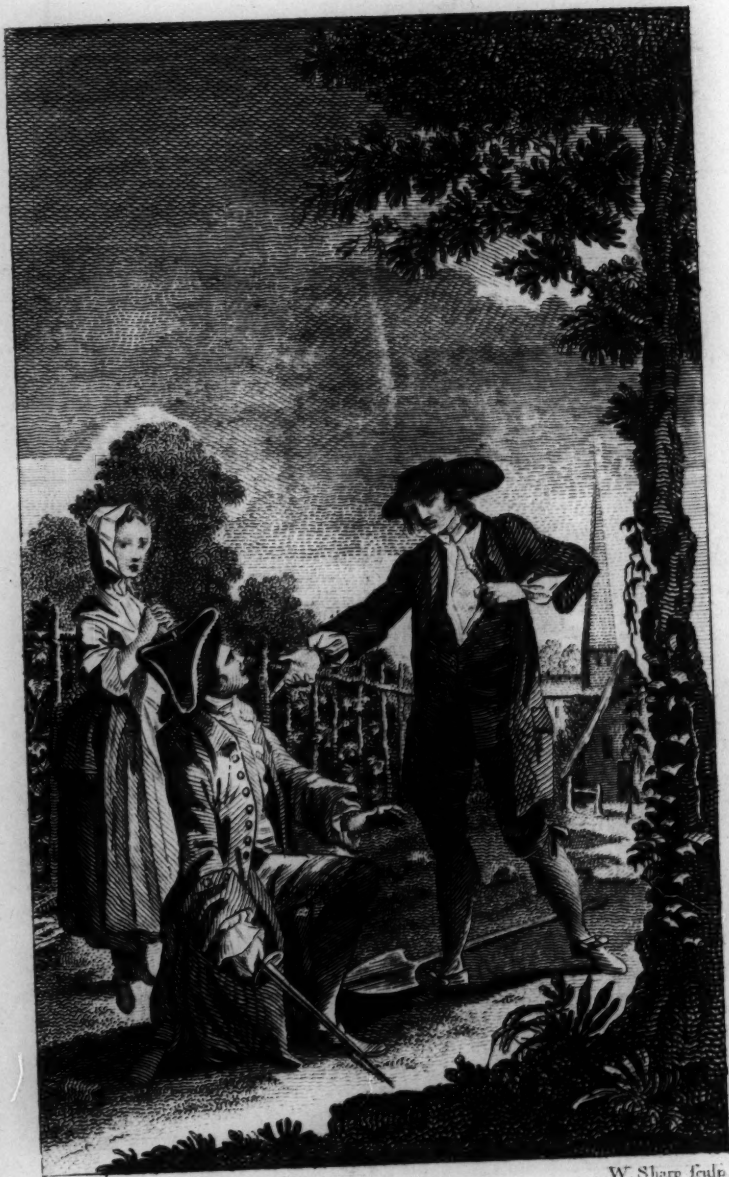
LAURETTA.



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LAURETTA.

LAURETTA.

IT was the festival of the village of Cou-
lange. The Marquis of Clancé, whose seat
was at no great distance, was come with his
company to see this rural spectacle, and to
mingle in the dances of the villagers, as it hap-
pens pretty often to those whom disgust chases
from the lap of luxury, and who are carried in
despite of themselves towards pleasures that are
pure and simple.

Among the young country girls who gave
new life to the joy that reigned there, and who
were dancing under the elm, who would not
have distinguished Lauretta, by the elegance of
her figure, the regularity of her features, and
that natural grace which is more touching
than beauty? She eclipsed all others that
assisted at the festival. Ladies of quality, who
piqued themselves on being handsome, could
not help owning that they had never seen any
thing so ravishing. They called her up to
them, and examined her, as a painter does a
model. "Lift up your eyes, child," said the
ladies.

ladies. "What vivacity, what sweetness, "what voluptuousness in her looks! If she "did but know what they express! What "havoc a skilfull coquette would make with "those eyes! And that mouth! Can any "thing be more fresh? What a vermillion "on her lips! How pure an enamel on her "teeth! Her face is a little brown, and sun- "burnt; but it is the complexion of health.— "See how that ivory neck is rounded on those "fine shoulders! How well she'd look in a "genteel dress! And those little budding "charms which love himself seems to have "planted!—Well! that is extremely pleasant! —"On whom is Nature going to lavish her "gifts? Where is beauty going to hide her- "self? Lauretta, how old are you?"—"I was fifteen last month."—"You are to "be married soon without doubt?"—"My "father says that there is no hurry."—"And "you, Lauretta, have you no sweetheart "lurking in your heart?"—"I don't know "what a sweetheart is."—"What, is there "no young man that you wish to have for a "husband?"—"I never trouble my head "about that: it is my father's business."—"What does your father do?"—"He cul- "tivates his farm."—"Is he rich?"—"No; "but he says he is happy if I am discreet."—"And how do you employ yourself?"—"I "help

“help my father; I work with him.”——
“With him! What! do you cultivate the
“ground?” — “Yes, but the toils of the
“vineyard are only an amusement to me.
“To weed, plant vine-props, bind the vine-
“branch to them, to thin the leaves that the
“grapes may ripen, and to gather it when it
“is ripe, all that is not very laborious.”——
“Poor child! I am not surprised that those
“fine hands are tanned! What pity that
“she should be born in a low and obscure
“state!”

Lauretta, who in her village had never excited any thing but envy, was a little surprised at her inspiring pity. As her father had carefully concealed from her whatever might have given her uneasiness, it had never come into her head that she was an object of pity. But in casting her eyes on the dress of those ladies, she saw very well that they were in the right. What difference between their clothes and her's! What freshness and what beauty in the light silken stuff which flowed in long folds about them? What delicate shoes! With what grace and elegance their hair was drest! What new lustre that fine linen, and those ribands; those laces gave to their half-veiled charms! Indeed those ladies had not the lively air of high health; but could Lauretta imagine that the luxury which dazzled her was the cause
of

of that languor, which rouge itself was not able to disguise? While she was ruminating on all this, the Count de Luzy approaches her, and invites her to dance with him. He was young, well dressed, well made, and too seducing for Lauretta.

Though she had not the most delicate taste in dancing, she could not but remark in the nobleness, the justness, and the lightness of the Count's movements, a grace which was not to be found in the caperings of the young villagers. She had sometimes felt her hand pressed, but never by a hand so soft. The Count in dancing followed her with his eyes. Lauretta found that his looks gave life and soul to the dance, and whether it was that she tried from emulation to give the same grace to hers, or whether the first spark of love communicated itself from her heart to her eyes, they replied to those of the Count by the most natural expression of joy and sentiment.

The dance ended, Lauretta went and seated herself at the foot of the elm, and the Count at her knees. "Let us not part any more," said he to her, "my pretty dear: I will dance with nobody but you." "That is doing me a great deal of honour," said she, "but it would make my companions uneasy; and in this village they are apt to be jealous."—"And well they may, to see you

“so handsome; and in town they would be
“the same: it is a misfortune which will
“follow you every where. Ah! Lauretta!
“if in Paris, in the midst of those women
“so vain of beauty which is only artificial,
“they were to see you appear, all at once, with
“those natural charms of which you are so
“unconscious!” — “I, Sir, at Paris! alas,
“what should I do there?” — “Be the de-
“light of all eyes, and make the conquest of
“all hearts. Hark-ye, Lauretta, we have not
“opportunity to talk together here. But, in
“two words; it depends only on yourself to
“have, instead of an obscure cottage, and a
“vineyard to cultivate, it depends only on
“yourself to have, at Paris, a little palace
“shining with gold and silk, a table according
“to your wish, the gayest furniture, the most
“elegant equipage, gowns for all seasons, and
“of all colours; in short, every thing which
“forms the agreeableness of an easy, quiet,
“and delicious life, without any other care
“than that of enjoying them, and of loving
“me as I do you. Think of it at your lei-
“sure. To-morrow there is to be a ball at
“the castle; all the youth of the village are
“invited. You will be there, my sweet
“Lauretta, and tell me if my passion touches
“you, and whether you accept my offers.
“To-day I ask nothing but secrecy, secrecy
“the

“the most inviolable. Observe it well: if it escape you, all the happiness which now awaits you will vanish like a dream.”

Lauretta thought she had been in a dream. The brilliant lot that had been painted to her was so far from the humble state to which she was reduced, that a passage so easy, and so rapid, from one to the other, was inconceivable. The handsome young man who had made her those offers, had not however the air of a deceiver. He had talked to her so seriously! She had seen so much sincerity in his eyes, and in his language!

“I should easily have perceived it,” said she, “if he had wanted to make a fool of me. And yet, why all this mystery which he has so strongly enjoined me? For making me happy, he requires me to love him: nothing more just: but sure he will consent that my father shall partake of his benefits; why then conceal our proceedings from my father?” If Lauretta had had the idea of seduction and vice, she would easily have comprehended wherefore Luzy demanded secrecy; but the discretion they had infused into her, went no farther than to teach her to decline the rough liberties of the village youths; and in the honest and respectful air of the Count, she saw nothing against which she was to be upon her guard.

Wholly

Wholely taken up with these reflexions, her head filled with the image of luxury and abundance, she returns to her humble habitation; every thing there seemed changed. Lauretta, for the first time, was mortified at living under thatch. The plain moveables, which use had before made precious to her, were debased in her eyes; the domestic cares which she had charged herself with, began to be disagreeable; she found no longer the same taste in that bread to which labour gives a relish, and on that fresh straw where she slept so well, she sighed for gilded roofs and a rich down bed.

It was much worse the next day, when she was obliged to return to labour, and to go on a burning hill, to support the heat of the day. "At Paris," said she, "I should wake only to enjoy myself at my ease, without any other care than that of loving, and of pleasing. His honour the Count assured me of it. How amiable the Count is! Of all the girls in the village he regarded only me; he even quitted the ladies of the castle for a poor country-girl. He is not proud, sweet gentleman! And yet he might very well be so! One would have thought that I did him a favour in preferring him to the young fellows of the village: he thanked me for it with looks so tender! an air so humble and touching! and language, what

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“an amiable sweetness in his language!
“Though he had talked to the lady of the
“place, he could not have spoken more gen-
“teely. By good luck, I was pretty well
“dressed; but if he were to see me to-day!
“What clothes! What a condition am I
“in!”

The disgust at her situation only redoubled, during three days of fatigue and heaviness, which she had still to sustain before she should again see the Count.

The moment, which they both expected with impatience, arrives. All the youth of the village are assembled at the neighbouring castle; and in a bower of linden-trees, the sound of instruments soon gives the signal for the dance. Lauretta advances with her companions, no longer with that deliberate air which she had at the village-feast, but with an air modest and timorous. This was to Luzy a new beauty, and she appeared as one of the graces, timid and decent, instead of a lively and wanton nymph. He distinguished her from the rest in his salute, but without any symptom of correspondence between them. He abstained even from approaching her, and delayed dancing with her, till another had set him the example. This other was the Chevalier de Soligny, who, ever since the village-feast, had never ceased talking of Lauretta in a
strain

strain of rapture. Luzy imagined him a rival, and anxiously followed him with his eyes; but it was needless for Lauretta to perceive his jealousy, in order to remove it. In dancing with Soligny, her look was vague, her air indifferent, her behaviour cold and negligent. It came to Luzy's turn to dance with her, and he thought he saw, as he saluted her, all her graces animate themselves, all her charms spring up in her countenance. The precious colouring of modesty diffused itself there; a furtive, and almost imperceptible smile moved her rosy lips; and the favour of a touching look transported him with joy and love. His first emotion, had they been alone, would have been to fall at Lauretta's feet, to thank her, and to adore her; but he commands his very eyes to restrain the fire of their looks; his hand alone, in pressing that of her whom his heart calls his love, expresses to her by tremblings his transports.

"Beautiful Lauretta," said he to her, after the dance, "remove a little from your companions. I am impatient to know what you have resolved."—"Not to take one step without the consent of my father, and to follow his advice in every thing. If you mean me good, I would have him partake of it; if I follow you, I would have him consent to it."—"Ah, beware of consult-

“ing him, it is he whom above all I ought to
“fear. There are formalities among you,
“previous to love and union, with which my
“title, my condition forbid me to comply.—
“Your father would subject me to them;
“he would require impossibilities of me;
“and on my refusal, he would accuse me of
“having wanted to deceive you. He knows
“not how much I love you; but you, Lau-
“retta, can you think me capable of doing
“you an injury?” — “Alas, no, I believe
“you to be goodness itself. You would be a
“great hypocrite if you were bad!” — “Dare
“then to trust to me.” — “It is not that I
“distrust you; but I cannot deal mysteriously
“with my father: I belong to him, I depend
“on him. If what you propose is proper,
“he will consent to it.” — “He will never
“consent to it. You will destroy me, you
“will repent it, when too late; and you will
“be all your life condemned to those vile la-
“bours which to be sure you love, since you
“dare not abandon them. Ah, Lauretta!
“are these delicate hands made to cultivate
“the ground? Must the sun destroy the co-
“lour of that beautiful complexion? You,
“the charm of Nature, of all the Graces, all
“the Loves; you, Lauretta, will you wear
“yourself out in an obscure and toilsome
“life! to be closed in becoming the wife of
“some

“some rude villager! to grow old perhaps
“in indigence, without having tasted any of
“those pleasures which ought to follow you
“perpetually! This is what you prefer to
“the delights of ease and affluence which I
“promise you. And on what do you found
“your resolution? On the fear of giving some
“moments of uneasiness to your father?
“Yes, your flight will afflict him; but after-
“wards, what will be his joy at seeing you
“rich by my favours, with which he also
“shall be loaded? What a pleasing violence
“will you not do him, in obliging him to
“quit his cottage, and give himself repose?
“For from that time I shall no longer have
“his denials to fear: my happiness, yours,
“and his, will be assured for ever.”

Lauretta had a good deal of difficulty to withstand the temptation, but she did withstand it: and but for the fatal accident which at last threw her again into the snare, the mere instinct of innocence would have sufficed to preserve her from it.

In a storm which fell on the village of Coulange, the hail destroyed all the promised vintages and harvests. The desolation was general. During the storm a thousand mournful cries mingled with the roaring of the winds and claps of thunder; but when the ravage was accomplished, and a light, more

dreadful than the darkness which had preceded it, let them see the vine-branches stripped and broken, the ears of corn hanging on their shattered stalks, the fruits of the trees beaten down or blasted, nothing prevailed, throughout the desolated country, but one vast and doleful silence: the roads were covered with a crowd of unfortunate people, pale, struck with consternation, and immoveable, who, with a melancholy eye contemplating their ruin, bewailed the loss of the year, and saw nothing to come but despair, misery, and death. On the thresholds of the cottages, the disconsolate mothers pressed against their bosoms their tender nurslings, exclaiming with tears in their eyes: "Who will give suck to you if we want bread?"

At the sight of this calamity, the first thought which occurred to Luzy, was the distress of Lauretta and her father. Impatient to fly to their relief, he veiled the tender interest he took in their fortunes, under a pretext of common pity to this multitude of wretches. "Let us go to the village," said he to his company; "let us carry consolation thither. It will be but little expence to each of us, to save twenty families from the despair into which this disaster has plunged them. We have partaken their joy, let us go and partake of their grief."

These

These words made an impression on their hearts, already moved by pity. The Marquis de Clancé set the example. He presented himself to the peasants, offered them assistance, promised them relief, and restored them to hope and courage. While tears of gratitude flowed around him, his company, of both sexes, dispersed themselves through the village, entered the straw huts, distributed their gifts, and tasted the rare and sensible delight of seeing themselves adored by a grateful people. In the mean time Luzy ran like a madman, seeking the abode of Lauretta. It was shown him: he flies thither, and sees a countryman sitting at the door, his head inclined on his knees, and covering his face with both his hands, as if he feared to see the light again.— This was Lauretta's father. "My friend," said the Count to him, "I see you are in consternation: but do not despair: heaven is just, and there are compassionate hearts among mankind." "Ah, Sir," replied the villager, lifting up his head, "is it for a man who, after having served his country twenty years, retired covered with wounds, and who has never since ceased to labour without relaxation, is it for him to stretch out his hand for charity? Ought not the earth, which is bedewed with my sweat, to give me subsistence? Shall I end my life by

D 4

"begging

“ begging my bread !” A soul so lofty, and so noble, in an obscure person, astonished the Count. “ You have served then ?” said he. “ Yes, Sir, I took up arms under Berwick, “ I made the campaigns of Maurice. My “ father, before an unfortunate law-suit had “ stripped him of his estate, had sufficient to “ support me in the rank to which I was arrived. But at the same time that I was “ reduced, he was undone. We came here “ to conceal ourselves ; and out of the wreck “ of our fortune we purchased a little farm, “ which I cultivated with my own hands.— “ Our former condition was unknown, and “ this latter, to which I seemed born, gave “ me no shame. I maintained, and consoled “ my father. I married, there was my mis- “ fortune ; and it is now that I feel it.” — “ Your father is dead ?”—“ Alas, yes.” — “ Your wife ?” — “ She is happy in not having seen this dismal day.” — “ Have you a “ family ?” — “ I have but one daughter, and “ the poor girl! Do not you hear her “ sighs ? She hides herself, and keeps at a “ distance from me, that she may not distract “ my soul.” Luzy would fain have rushed into the cottage where Lauretta was mourning ; but he restrained himself, for fear of a discovery.

“ Here,”

"Here," said he to the father, giving him his purse: "this assistance is very small: but when you want, remember the Count de Luzy. I live at Paris." On saying these words he went away, without giving Lauretta's father time to return him thanks.

What was the astonishment of the good old Basil, on finding a considerable sum in the purse! Fifty louis, more than triple the revenue of his little vineyard! "Come hither, my child," cried he; "look at him who goes yonder; it is not a man, it is an angel from heaven. But I am deceived. It is not possible that he should intend to give me so much. Go, Lauretta, run after him, and let him see that he has committed a mistake." Lauretta flies after Luzy, and having overtaken him, "My father," said she to him, "cannot believe that you intended to make us so great a present. He sends me to return it to you." — "Ah, Lauretta, is not all that I have at your and your father's disposal? Can I pay him too richly for having given birth to you? Carry back this poor gift: it is only an earnest of my good will: but carefully conceal from him the motive: tell him only that I am too happy in obliging a man of worth." Lauretta was about to return him thanks. "To-morrow," said he to her, "at break of

“ day, as I pass the end of the village, I will
“ receive, if you please, your thanks with
“ your adieus.” — “ What ! do you go away
“ to-morrow ! ” — “ Yes, I go away the most
“ passionate lover, and most unhappy of men.”
— “ At break of day ? — That is about the hour
“ when my father and I go out to work.” —
“ Together ? ” — “ No ; he goes first : I
“ have the care of the house upon me, and
“ that delays me a little.” — “ And do you
“ pass my road ? ” — “ I cross it above the
“ village ; but were it necessary to go out of
“ my way, it is certainly the least that I owe
“ you for so many marks of friendship.” —
“ Adieu then, Lauretta, till to-morrow. —
“ Let me see you, though but for a moment :
“ that pleasure will be the last of my life.”

Bazil, at Lauretta's return, had no more
doubt of Luzy's benefactions. “ Ah, the
“ good young man ! Ah, excellent heart ! ”
cried he every instant. “ However, daughter,
“ let us not neglect what the hail has left us. —
“ The less there is of it, the more care we
“ must take of what is left.”

Lauretta was so touched with the Count's
goodness, so afflicted at being the cause of his
unhappiness, that she wept all the night. —
“ Ah, if it were not for my father,” said she,
“ what pleasure should I have had in follow-
“ ing him ! ” The next day she did not put
on

on her holiday clothes ; but notwithstanding the extreme simplicity of her dress, she forgot not to mingle in it a little coquetry natural to her age. " I shall see him no more : what does it signify whether I am more or less handsome in his eyes ? For one moment it is not worth the trouble." On saying these words, she adjusted her cap and her tucker. She bethought her of carrying him some fruit in her breakfast-basket. " He will not despise them," said she : " I will tell him that I have gathered them." And while she ranged the fruit on a bed of vine-leaves, she bedewed them with her tears. Her father was already set out ; and with the grey light of the dawn was already mingled that gentle tint of gold and purple diffused by Aurora, when the poor girl, with a distracted heart, arrived alone at the end of the village. The instant after, she saw the Count's post-coach appear, and at that sight she was troubled. The moment that he saw her, Luzy leaped out of his carriage : and coming towards her with an air of sorrow, " I am penetrated, beautiful-Lauretta," said he to her, " with the favour which you do me. I have at least the consolation to see you sensible of my pain, and I can believe that you are sorry at having made me unhappy." " I am distressed at it," replied Lauretta, " and would give all the
" wealth

“wealth you have bestowed on us, never to
“have seen you.” — “And I, Lauretta, I would
“give all I have never to quit you as long as
“I live.” — “Alas, I should think it de-
“pended only on yourself: my father could
“refuse you nothing: he loves you, he re-
“veres you.” — “Fathers are cruel; they
“would have us marry: and I cannot marry
“you; let us think no more of it: we are
“going to leave each other, to bid an eternal
“adieu: we who never, if you had been in-
“clined to it, would have ceased to live for
“one another, to love each other, to enjoy
“together all the gifts which fortune has be-
“stowed on me, and all those which love has
“conferred on you. Ah! you have no con-
“ception of the pleasures which awaited us.
“If you had any idea of them! If you knew
“what you renounce!” — “Why, without
“knowing them I feel them. Be assured,
“that ever since I have seen you, every thing
“that is not you, is nothing to me. At first
“my mind was dazzled with the fine things
“which you had promised me: but since all
“that is vanished: I have thought of it no
“longer, I have thought only of you, Ah!
“if my father would agree to it!” — “What
“occasion for his agreeing to it! Do you
“wait for his consent to love me! Does not
“our happiness depend on ourselves? Love,
“fidelity,

"fidelity, Lauretta, these are your titles, and
"my securities. Are there any more sacred,
"more inviolable? Ah! believe me, when
"the heart is bestowed, every thing is
"over, and the hand has only to follow it.—
"Give me then that hand, that I may kiss
"it a thousand times, that I may bedew it
"with my tears." "There it is," said she,
weeping. "It is mine," cried he, "this
"dear hand is mine, I hold it of love: to take
"it from me, they must take my life. Yes,
"Lauretta, I shall die at your feet, if we
"must part." Lauretta really believed that
he would literally die on losing her. "Alas!"
said she, "and shall I be the cause?"—"Yes,
"cruel girl, you will be the cause. You de-
"sire my death, you do."—"Oh! heaven, no:
"I would lay down my life for you."—
"Prove it then," said he, doing her at the
"same time a kind of violence, "and follow
"me if you love me."—"No," said she,
"I cannot, I cannot without the consent of
"my father."—"Very well, leave, leave
"me then to my despair." At these words
Lauretta, pale and trembling, her heart pierced
with sorrow and fear, dared neither to hold
Luzy's hand, nor let it go. Her eyes, full of
tears, followed with terror the distracted
looks of the Count. "Deign," said she to
him, in order to appease him, "deign to pity
"me,

“me, and to see me without anger. I hoped
“this testimony of my gratitude would have
“been agreeable to you; but I dare no longer
“offer it you.” “What is it?” said he:
“Fruit, and for me! Ah, you little tyrant,
“you insult me. Give me poison.” And
throwing down the basket, he retired in a rage.

Lauretta took that emotion for hatred, and
her heart, already too much softened, could
not support this last attack. Scarce had she
strength to get away a few paces, and faint
at the foot of a tree. Luzy, who followed her
with his eyes, runs up and finds her bathed
with tears, her bosom choaked with sobs,
pale, and almost lifeless. He is distressed, he
thinks at first only of recalling her to life:
but soon as he sees her spirits return, he avails
himself of her weakness, and before she is well
recovered of her swooning, she is already at a
great distance from the village, in the Count’s
coach, and in the arms of her ravisher.—

“Where am I?” said she on opening her
eyes: “Ah, my Lord Count, is it you!
“Are you carrying me back to the village!”
“Dearest half of my soul,” said he to her,
pressing her against his bosom, “I have lived
“to see the moment when our adieus almost
“cost us both our lives. Let us put no more
“to that trial two hearts too weak to sustain
“it.”

“ I

“ I resign myself to thee, my dear Lauretta ;
“ on thy lips I swear to live for thee alone.”
“ I ask no better lot,” said she to him, “ than
“ to live also for you alone. But my father !
“ Shall I leave my father ? Has not he a right
“ to dispose of me ?” — “ Thy father, my
“ Lauretta, shall be loaded with riches ; he
“ shall partake the happiness of his daughter :
“ we will be both his children. Depend on
“ my tenderness to ease and console him. —
“ Come, let me catch those tears, let me drop
“ my own into thy bosom : they are the tears
“ of joy, the tears of pleasure.” The dan-
gerous Luzy mingled with his language all
the charms of seduction, and Lauretta was
not insensible : while her father, uneasy, af-
flicted, seeking his daughter, calling on her
with loud cries, asked after her through the
whole village ; and not seeing her again in the
evening, and retiring distressed, in despair at
having lost her, that image presents itself to
his mind, wholly occupies it, and troubles it
without ceasing. It was necessary to beguile
his grief.

Luzy ran with his horses, the blinds of his
carriage were let down, his people were sure
and faithful, and Lauretta left behind her no
trace of her flight. It was even essential to
Luzy to conceal his having carried her off.
He detached one of his domestics, who from
a vil-

a village quite out of the road, contrived to transmit to the minister of Coulange this billet, in which Luzy had disguised his hand-writing. "Tell Lauretta's father to be easy ; that she "is well, and that the lady, who has taken "her with her, will have the same care of her "as of her own child. In a short time he "shall know what is become of her."

This note, which was far from affording consolation to the father, suffered to palliate the crime of elopement to the daughter. Love had penetrated into her soul ; he laid open the avenues of it to pleasure ; and from that time the clouds of grief dispersed, the tears dried up, sorrow was appeased, and a transient, but profound oblivion of every thing but her lover, suffered her to taste, without remorse, the criminal happiness of being his.

The kind of delirium, into which she fell on arriving at Paris, completed the dissipation of her soul. Her house was a fairy-palace ; every thing in it had the air of enchantment. The bath, the toilette, the supper, the delicious repose which love left her, were so many varied forms which voluptuousness assumed, to seduce her through the medium of her senses. When she waked, she thought herself still deceived by a dream. When she rose, she saw herself surrounded with women, attentive to serve her, and jealous of pleasing her. She, who

who had only studied to obey, had only to desire in order to be obeyed. "You are "queen here," said her lover, "and I am "your principal slave."

Imagine, if it is possible, the surprise and transport of a young and simple country-girl, at seeing her fine black hair, so negligently tied till that time, the wavy ringlets of which nature alone had formed, now rounding into curls beneath the ply of art, and rising in a diadem, bespangled with flowers and diamonds; at seeing displayed to her eyes the most gallant ornaments, which seemed to solicit her choice; at seeing, I say, her beauty issue, radiant as from a cloud, and spring up again in the brilliant pannels which environed her, in order to multiply her charms. Nature had lavished on her all her graces; but some of those gifts had need of being cultivated, and the accomplishments came in a crowd to dispute with each other the care of instructing her, and the glory of embellishing her. Luzy possessed and adored his conquest, intoxicated with joy and love.

In the mean time, the good Bazil was the most unhappy of fathers. Brave, full of honour, and above all jealous of his daughter's reputation; he had sought her, expected her in vain, without publishing his uneasiness: and nobody in the village was made acquaint-
ed

ed with his misfortune. The minister came to assure him of it himself, by communicating to him the note which he had received. Basil gave no credit to this note ; but, dissembling with the pastor, " My daughter is discreet," said he to him, " but she is young, simple, " and credulous. Some lady has had a mind " to take her into her service, and has pre- " vailed on her to prevent my denial. Let " us, for fear of scandal, hush up this little " imprudence of youth, and leave the people " to believe that my daughter quitted me " with my own consent. The secret rests " with you ; spare the daughter and the fa- " ther." The minister, a prudent and wor- thy man, promised and kept silence. But Basil, devoured by chagrin, passed the days and nights in tears. " What is become of " her ?" said he ; " Is it a lady that she has " followed ? Is there any so mad as to rob a " father of his daughter, and to undertake to " carry her off ? No, no, it is some ravisher " who has seduced and ruined her. Ah, if " I can discover him, either his blood or " mine shall wash out my injury." He went himself to the village, whence they had brought the note. By the minister's informations he contrived to discover the person who had been charged with the message ; he examined him ; but his answers only confused him the more.

The

The very situation of the place served only to mislead him. It was six leagues out of the road which Luzy had taken, and lay quite across the country. But had Basil even combined the two circumstances of the departure of the Count and his daughter's elopement, he would never have suspected so virtuous a young man. As he confided his grief to nobody, nobody could give him any light. — He groaned therefore within himself, in expectation of some casual gleam to clear up his suspicions. “Oh, heaven,” said he, “it was in your wrath that you gave her to me! And I, mad as I was, congratulated myself on seeing her grow up and improve! What formed my pride, now constitutes my shame. Oh, that she had died as soon as she was born!”

Lauretta endeavoured to persuade herself that her father was easy, and the regret of having left him, touched her but faintly. — Love, vanity, a taste for pleasures, a taste ever so lively in its birth, the care of cultivating her talents; in short, a thousand amusements, continually varied, divided her life, and filled her soul. Luzy, who loved her to idolatry, and who feared lest he should lose her, exposed her as little as possible in public: but he contrived her all the means which mystery has invented, of being invisible amidst the great

great world. This was enough for Lauretta : happy in pleasing him whom she loved, she felt not that restless desire, that want of being seen and admired, which alone brings out so many handsome women to our spectacles and gardens. Though Luzy, by the choice of a small circle of amiable men, rendered his suppers amusing, she was taken up at them only with him ; and she was able to convince him of it without disobliging any body else. The art of reconciling partialities to good manners, is the secret of delicate souls : coquetry studies it ; love knows it without having learnt it.

Six months passed away in that union, that sweet intelligence of two hearts filled and ravished with each other, without weariness, without uneasiness, without any other jealousy than that which makes us fear that we do not please so much as we love, and which renders us desirous of combining every thing that can captivate a heart.

In this interval Lauretta's father had twice received news of his daughter, with presents from the lady who had taken her into friendship. It was to the minister that Luzy directed. Remitted to the next post to the village by a faithful servant, the packets came to hand anonymous ; Bazil could not tell to whom to send them back ; and then his re-

fusals

husbands would have created doubts of what he wished to be believed, and he trembled lest the curate should have the same suspicions with himself. "Alas!" said the good father to himself, "my daughter is, perhaps, yet virtuous. Appearances accuse her; but they are only appearances: and though my suspicions should be just, I must lament, but I ought not to dishonour my child."

Heaven owed some consolation to the virtue of this worthy father; and it was heaven, without doubt, which brought about the accident I am going to relate.

The little wine trade which Basil carried on, obliged him to come to Paris. As he was traversing that immense city, he was stopped in the street by some carriages crossing each other. The voice of a lady in a fright engaged his attention. He sees . . He dares not believe his eyes . . Lauretta, his daughter, in a gilt glass chariot, superbly dressed, and crowned with diamonds. Her father would not have known her, if, perceiving him herself, surprise and confusion had not made her shrink back and cover her face. At the movement which she made to hide herself, and still more at the cry which escaped her, he could not doubt but it was she. While the carriages which were locked together were disengaging,
Basil

Basil slips between the wall and his daughter's chariot, gets up to the step of the chariot-door, and with a severe tone, says to Lauretta, "Where do you live?" Lauretta, seized with fear and trembling, tells him her habitation. "And what name do you go by?" — "*Cou-lange*," replied she, looking down, "from the place of my birth." — "Of your birth!" "Ah, wretch! . . . This evening, at dusk, be at home, and alone." At these words he gets down, and pursues his way.

The shock which Lauretta had received was not yet overcome, when she found herself at home.

Luzy supped in the country. She was left to herself at the moment when she had most need of counsel and support. She was going to appear before her father, whom she had betrayed, forsaken, and overwhelmed with grief and shame: her crime then presented itself to her in the most odious form. She began to feel the vileness of her condition.— The intoxication of love, the charms of pleasure had banished the thought; but as soon as the veil was fallen off, she saw herself such as she was in the eyes of the world, and in the eyes of her father. Terrified at the examination and sentence which she was about to undergo, "Wretch!" cried she, melting into tears, "where can I fly! Where can

"I hide

"I hide me! My father, honesty itself, again finds me, gone astray, abandoned to vice, with a man who is nothing to me! O my Father! O terrible judge! How shall I appear before you?" It came more than once into her mind to avoid him and disappear; but vice had not yet effaced from her soul the holy laws of nature. "I, to reduce him to despair," said she; "and after having merited his reproaches to draw his curse upon me! No, though unworthy the name of his daughter, I revere that sacred name. Though he came to kill me with his own hand, I ought to wait it, and to fall at his feet. But, no, a father is always a father. Mine will be touched with my tears. My age, my weakness, the Count's love, his favours all plead for me; and when Luzy shall speak, I shall no longer be so culpable."

She would have been distressed if her people had been witnesses of the humiliating scene which was preparing. By good luck she had given out that she supped with a friend, and her women had made themselves a holiday that evening. It was easy to her to get rid of two footmen who attended her, and when her father arrived, she received him herself.

"Are you alone?"—"Yes, Sir."—He enters with emotion, and after having looked her

her in the face, in a sorrowful and melancholy silence. "What business have you here?" said he. Lauretta answered by throwing herself at his feet, and bathing them with her tears. "I see," said the father, casting his eyes around him, "in this apartment where every thing bespeaks riches and luxury, I see that vice is at its ease in this town.—May I know who has taken care to enrich you in so short a time, and from whom came this furniture, these clothes, that fine equipage in which I saw you?"—Lauretta still replied only by tears and sighs. "Speak to me," said he, "you shall weep afterwards; you will have time enough."

At the recital of her story, of which she disguised nothing, Bazil passed from astonishment to indignation. "Luzy!" said he, "that worthy man! . . . These then are the virtues of the great! The base wretch! In giving me his gold, did he think he paid me for my daughter? These proud rich folks think, that the honour of the poor is a thing of no value, and that misery sets itself to sale. He flattered himself with consoling me! He promised you to do it! Unnatural man! how little does he know the soul of a Father! No, ever since I lost thee, I have not had one moment without sorrow, not one quarter of an hour of
"peaceful

“ peaceful sleep. By day, the ground which
“ I cultivated was watered with my tears : in
“ the night, while you forgot yourself, while
“ you were losing yourself in guilty pleasures,
“ your father, stretched on his straw, tore his
“ hair, and called on you with loud cries. —
“ Ah what ! Have my groans never re-echoed
“ to thy soul ! Has the image of a father
“ distressed never presented itself to your
“ thought, never troubled your repose ! ” —
“ Oh ! Heaven is my witness,” said she,
“ that if ever I had thought I had occasioned
“ you so much sorrow, I would have quitted
“ every thing to fly to your arms. I revere
“ you, I love you, I love you more than ever.
“ Alas ! what a father have I afflicted ! At
“ this very instant, when I expected to find
“ in you an inexorable judge, I hear from
“ your own mouth only reproaches full of
“ gentleness. Ah, my father ! when I fell at
“ your feet I felt only shame and fear ; but
“ now it is with affection that you see me
“ penetrated, and to the tears of repentance
“ are joined those of love ! ” “ Ah ! I revive,
“ I now find my daughter again,” cried
Bazil, raising her up, “ Your daughter,
“ alas ! ” said Laretta, “ she is no longer
“ worthy of you. ” — “ No, do not discourage
“ thyself. Honour, Laretta, is without
“ doubt a great happiness ; innocence a greater
VOL. III. E “ still ;

“still; and if I had the choice, I would
“rather have seen thee deprived of life. But
“when innocence and honour are lost, there
“still remains one inestimable good; virtue
“which never perishes, which we never lose
“without return. We have only to wish
“for it, it springs up again in the soul; and
“when we think it extinguished, a single
“touch of remorse gives birth to it a-new.—
“This will console you, daughter, for the
“loss of your innocence, and if your repent-
“ance be sincere, heaven and your father are
“appeased. For the rest, nobody in the vil-
“lage knows your adventure; you may appear
“there again without shame.”—“Where, my
“father?” — “At Coulange, whither I am
“going to carry you.” (These words em-
barrassed Lauretta.) “Haste,” continued
Bazil, “to strip off those ornaments of vice.
“Plain linen, a simple boddice, a white
“petticoat, these are the raiments of thy con-
“dition. Leave his envenomed gifts, to
“the wretch who has seduced you, and fol-
“low me without more delay.”

One must have been possessed at this mo-
ment of the timid and tender soul of Lauretta,
must have loved, like her, a father and a lover,
to conceive, to feel the combat which arose in
her feeble heart, between love and nature.
The trouble and agitation of her spirits kept
her

her immoveable and mute. "Let us go," said the father, "moments are precious."—"Pardon me," cried Laretta, falling again on her knees before him, "pardon me, my father; be not offended if I am slow to obey you. You have read the bottom of my soul. Luzy wants the name of husband; but all the rights which the tenderest love can give him, he has over me. I would fly him, detach myself from him, follow you though to death. But to steal away in his absence, to leave him to believe that I have betrayed him!"—"How, wretch? and what signifies to you the opinion of a vile deceiver? and what are the rights of a passion which has ruined and dishonoured you? You love him! you love your shame then. You prefer his vile favours to the innocence which he has robbed you of? You prefer to your father the most cruel of your enemies? You dare not fly him in his absence, and quit him without his consent! Ah! when you were to quit your father, to overwhelm him, to drive him to destruction, you were not then so timorous. And what do you expect from your ravisher? That he should defend you? That he should withdraw you from paternal authority? Oh! let him come; let him dare to drive me hence; I am

E 2 "alone,

“ alone, unarmed, enfeebled by age ; but
“ they shall see me extended on the threshold
“ of your door, calling for vengeance to
“ God and man. Your lover himself, in
“ order to get at thee, shall march over my
“ body, and passers-by shall say with horror,
“ There is the father whom she disavows, and
“ whom her lover tramples under his feet.”

“ Ah! my father,” said Lauretta terrified at this image, “ how little do you know the
“ man whom you rail against so cruelly!
“ Nothing is gentler, nothing more sensible.
“ You will be to him respectable and sacred.”
—“ Dare you talk to me of the respect of one
“ who dishonours me? Dost thou hope that
“ he may seduce me with his perfidious gentleness? I will not see him: if you can
“ answer for him, I cannot answer for myself.”—“ Well, do not see him, but permit
“ me to see him, but for a moment.” —
“ What do you ask? me to leave you alone
“ with him! Ah! though he should take
“ away my life, I would not shew him that
“ complaisance. While he was able to keep
“ you from me it was his crime, it was thine,
“ I was not answerable for it. But heaven
“ now puts you again under my guard, and
“ from this moment I answer to heaven for
“ thee. Let us go, daughter, it is already
“ dark; this is the instant for us to depart!
“ resolve:

“ resolve : renounce thy father, or obey.” —
“ You pierce my heart.” — “ Obey, I tell
“ thee, or dread my curse.” At these terrible
words, the trembling Lauretta had no strength
to reply. She undresses herself before her
father’s eyes, and puts on, not without a flood
of tears, the plain dress which he had pre-
scribed to her. “ My father,” said she to
him at the moment she was preparing to fol-
low him, “ dare I ask, as the price of my
“ obedience, one single favour? You do not
“ wish the death of him whom I sacrifice to
“ you. Suffer me to write him two words, to
“ inform him it is you that I obey, and that
“ you oblige me to follow you.” — “ What !
“ that he may come to carry you off again,
“ to steal you from me? No, I will leave no
“ trace of you. Let him die of shame, he
“ will do justice upon himself : but of love !
“ never fear that : libertines never die of it.”
Then taking his daughter by the hand, he
carried her out without noise : and the next
morning, embarking on the Seine, they re-
turned into their own country.

At midnight the Count arrives at his house,
where he flatters himself pleasure awaits, and
love invites him, and finds all there in alarm
and confusion.

Lauretta’s people tell him with fright that
they do not know what is become of her ; that

they have sought her in vain ; that she had taken care to send them out of the way, and had seized that moment to elude their vigilance ; that she did not sup at her friend's ; and that on going off she had left every thing behind her, even to her diamonds, and to the gown she had worn that day.

“ We must wait for her,” said Luzy after a long silence. “ Do not go to bed : there is “ something incomprehensible in this affair.”

Love, which seeks to flatter itself, began by conjectures to excuse Lauretta ; but finding them all destitute of probability, he delivered himself up to the most cruel suspicions. “ An involuntary accident might have detained her ; but in the absence of her people to “ undress herself, to make her escape alone, at “ dusk, to leave her house in uneasiness ! all “ this,” said he, “ clearly shows a premeditated flight. Has heaven touched her ? Is it “ remorse that has determined her to fly me ? “ Ah ! why can I not at least believe it ! but “ if she had taken an honest part, she would “ have had pity of me, she would have written “ to me, though it were but two words, of “ consolation and adieu. Her letter would “ not have betrayed her, and would have “ spared me suspicions, grievous to me, and “ dishonourable to her. Lauretta, O heaven ! “ candour itself, innocence, truth ! Lauretta “ unfaithful

“unfaithful and perfidious ! she who but
“this very morning . . . No, no, it is incre-
“dible . . . and yet it is but too true.” Every
moment, every reflexion seemed a new proof :
but hope and confidence could not quit his
heart. He struggled against persuasion, as an
‘expiring man against death. “If she were to
“return,” said he, “if she were to return in-
“nocent and faithful ! Ah, would my fortune,
“my life, all my love be sufficient to repair
“the injury I do her ! What pleasure should
“I have in confessing myself in fault ! With
“what transports, with what tears, would I
“efface the crime of having accused her !
“Alas ! I dare not flatter myself with being
“unjust ; I am not so happy.”

There is nobody who, in the uneasiness
and ardour of expectation, has not sometimes
experienced at Paris the torment of listening
to the noise of the coaches, each of which we
take for that which we expect, and each of
which by turns arrives, and carries away, as it
passes, the hope which it has just excited. The
unhappy Luzy was till three in the morning
in this cruel perplexity. Every carriage
which he heard was, perhaps, that which was
bringing back Lauretta ; at last hope, so often
deceived, gave place to despair. “I am
“betrayed,” said he, “I can no longer doubt
“it. It is a plot which has been concealed

“ from me. The caresses of the perfidious
“ creature served only the better to disguise it.
“ They have artfully chosen the day on which
“ I was to sup in the country. She has left
“ every thing behind her, to let me under-
“ stand that she has no further occasion for
“ my presents. Another without doubt
“ overwhelms her with them. She would
“ have been ashamed to have had any thing
“ of mine. The most feeble pledge of my
“ love would have been a perpetual reproach
“ of her treachery and ingratitude. She
“ would forget me, in order to deliver her-
“ self up in peace to the man she prefers.—
“ Ah the perjured wretch! does she hope to
“ find any one who loves her like me? I
“ loved her too well, I gave myself too much
“ up to it. Her desires, by being perpetually
“ prevented, became extinct. These are the
“ ways of women. They grow tired of every
“ thing, even of being happy. Ah! can’st
“ thou be so now, perfidious girl! Can’st thou
“ be so, and think of me? Of me! do I
“ say? What signify to her my love and
“ grief? Ah, while I can scarce restrain my
“ cries, while I bathe her bed with my tears,
“ another, perhaps, . . . Horrible thought! I
“ cannot support it, I will know this rival,
“ and if the fire which burns in my breast
“ has not consumed me before day, I will
“ not

"not die without vengeance. It is doubtless
"some one of those false friends whom I have
"imprudently introduced to her. Soligny,
"perhaps . . . He was taken with her, when
"we saw her in her own village . . . She was
"simple and sincere then. How is she
"changed! He wanted to see her again, and
"I, poor easy fool! thinking myself beloved,
"believing it impossible for Lauretta to be
"unfaithful, brought my rival to her. I may
"be deceived, but in short it is he whom I
"suspect. I will be satisfied instantly. —
"Follow me," said he to one of his domestics;
and it was scarce day-light, when, knocking at the Chevalier's door, Luzy asked to see him, "He is not at home, Sir," said the Swiss. — "Not at home!" — "No, Sir, he is in the country." — "How long since?" — "Since yesterday evening." — "At what hour?" — "About dusk." — "And what part of the country is he gone to?" — "We do not know: he has taken only his valet-de-chambre with him." — "In what carriage?" — "In his vis-a-vis." — "Is his absence to be long?" — "He will not be back this fortnight, and has ordered me to take care of his letters." — "At his return tell him that I was here, and that I desire to see him."

At last, said he, on going away, "I am convinced. Every thing agrees. Nothing remains but to discover where they have concealed themselves. I will tear her from his arms, the perfidious wretch! and I will have the pleasure of washing away with his blood my injury and her treachery!"

His researches were ineffectual. The Chevalier's journey was a mystery which he could not penetrate. Luzy was therefore fifteen days on the rack; and the full persuasion that Soligny was the ravisher, diverted him from every other idea.

In his impatience, he sent every morning to know if his rival was returned. At last he was told, that he was just arrived. He flies to him, enflamed with anger; and the favourable reception given him by the Chevalier only irritated him more. "My dear Count," said Soligny, "you have been very earnest in your enquiries for me; how can I serve you?" "In ridding me," replied Luzy, at the same time turning pale, "either of a life which I detest, or of a rival whom I hate. You have carried off my mistress; nothing remains but to pluck out my heart."—"My friend," said the Chevalier to him, "I have as great a desire to have my throat cut as yourself, for I am quite mad with vexation; but I have no quarrel with you;

“you ; if you please, let us understand each other. Lauretta has been carried off, you say ; I am very sorry for it ; she was a charming girl ; but upon honour it was not by me. Not that I pique myself on any delicacy in that point. In love I forgive my own friends, and allow myself these little petty-larcenies ; and though I heartily love you, yet, if Lauretta had thought proper to deceive you for me, rather than for another, I should not have been cruel. But as to carrying them off, I don’t like that, that is too serious a business for me ; and if you have no other reason for killing me, I advise you to let me live, and to breakfast with me.” Though the Chevalier’s language had very much the air of frankness, Luzy still retained his suspicions. “You disappeared,” said he, “the same evening, at the same hour : you lay hid for a fortnight ; I know besides that you loved her, and that you had an inclination for her at the very time that I took her.”

“You are in luck,” said Soligny, “that in the humour I am now in, I love you enough to come to an explanation. Lauretta went off the same evening with me ; I have nothing to say to that : it is one of those critical rencounters which form the intrigue of romances. I thought Lauretta

“beautiful

“ beautiful as an angel, and I had an inclination for her, it is true ; but if you will cut the throats of all who are guilty of the same crime, mercy upon one half of Paris ! The important article then is the secret of my journey, and absence ? Very well, I will explain that matter.”

“ I was in love with Madam de Blanson, or rather I was in love with her riches, her birth, her credit at court ; for that woman has every thing in her favour, except herself. You know, that if she is neither young nor handsome, to make amends she has a deal of sensibility, and is easily set on fire. I had got into her good graces, and saw no impossibility to be, as it is called, happy, without proceeding to marriage. But marriage was my point ; and under cover of that respectful timidity, inseparable from a delicate love, I eluded all opportunities of making an ill use of her weakness. So much reserve disconcerted her. She never saw, she said, a man so timorous and so much of the novice. I was as bashful as a young girl : my modesty absolutely tantalized her. In short, not to trouble you with all the arts I employed for three months to sustain attacks without surrendering, never did coquette strive so much to kindle ineffectual desires. My conduct was a
“ master-

“master-piece of prudence and dexterity :
“but the widow was too hard for me. I am
“her dupe : yes, my friend, she has surprised
“my credulous innocence. Seeing that she
“must attack me regularly, she talked of
“marriage. Nothing was more advantageous
“than her proposals. Her fortune was to be
“entirely in my power. There remained
“only one bar to our happiness. I was very
“young, and she was not sufficiently ac-
“quainted with my character. In order to
“try one another, she proposed to me to pass
“some days together. *tête-à-tête*, in the coun-
“try. “A fortnight’s solitude and liberty,
“said she, will give us a truer idea of each
“other, than two years at Paris.” I gave into
“the snare, and she managed so well that I
“forgot my resolution. How frail is man,
“and how little certain of himself ! Having
“taken up the part of husband, I was obliged
“to maintain it, and I gave her the best opi-
“nion of me that I possibly could ; but in
“a short time she thought she perceived that
“my love abated. It was in vain that I pro-
“tested it was the same : she told me that she
“was not to be deceived with empty words,
“and that she plainly saw the change in me.
“In short, this morning, I received my dis-
“charge in form from under her own hands.
“It runs in these words. “The slender
“trial

“trial which I have made of your sentiments
“is sufficient. Begone, Sir, whenever you
“please. I would have a husband whose
“attentions should never relax : who loves
“me always, and always the same.” Are
“you satisfied ? There is my adventure.—
“You see it is quite of a different nature from
“that which you attribute to me. I have
“been carried off, as well as your Lauretta ;
“heaven grant, that they have not done by
“her as they did by me ! But now you are
“undeceived with respect to me, have you no
“other suspicion ?” “I am lost in them,”
said Luzy : “forgive my sorrow, my despair,
“and my love, the step which I have just
“taken.” “’Pshaw !” replied Soligny :
“nothing was more just. If I had taken
“away your mistress, I must have given
“you satisfaction. There is nothing in it ; so
“much the better : and so we are good
“friends. Will you breakfast with me ?”—
“I would die.” —“That would be going
“rather too far. Preserve that remedy for
“more serious disgraces. Lauretta is a pretty
“girl, though a little knavish baggage ;
“endeavour to see her again ; but if you
“cannot get her, take another, and, the
“sooner the better.”

While Luzy remained inconsolable, and
was scattering his money with a liberal hand,
in

in order to discover some traces of Lauretta she was at her father's lamenting her error, or rather her lover.

Bazil had given out in the village, that he had not been able to live without his daughter, and that he had been to fetch her home. They found her still improved. Her graces were now blown ; and that which is called the air of Paris had given her new charms, even in the eyes of the villagers. The ardour of the youths who had sought her was renewed, and became still more lively. But her father refused them all. " You shall never marry in my life-time," said he. " I would not impose upon any one. Work and lament with me. I have just sent back to your unworthy lover all his presents. We owe him nothing now, except our shame."

Lauretta, humble and submissive, obeyed her father without complaining, and without daring to raise her eyes towards him. It was to her an incredible difficulty to resume the habitude of indigence and labour. Her feet, grown tender, were wounded ; her delicate hands were made sore ; but these were slight evils. " The pains of the body are nothing," said she, groaning ; " those of the soul are much more grievous."

Though Luzy was perpetually present to her, and her heart was not able to detach itself from

from him, she had no longer either the hope or desire of returning to him. She knew what bitterness her going astray had diffused over the life of her unhappy father; and though she had been at liberty to quit him again, she would not have consented to it. But the image of the grief, in which she had left her lover, pursued her, and was her torment. The right he had to accuse her of perfidy and ingratitude, was a fresh cause of anguish.—

“If I could but write to him! But I have
“neither the liberty, nor the means. Not
“content with obliging me to abandon him,
“they would have me forget him. I shall
“sooner forget myself; and it is as impossible
“for me to hate him as to forget him. If he
“was culpable, his love was the cause, and I
“cannot punish him for it. In all that he
“did he meant only my happiness and my
“father’s. He deceived himself, he led me
“astray: but at his age one thinks only of
“love. Yes, I owe it to him, I owe it to
“myself, to clear up my conduct; and
“in that point alone my father shall not be
“obeyed.” The difficulty now was only to
procure the means of writing; but her father,
without intending it, had spared her the
trouble.

One evening Luzy, retiring more afflicted than ever, received an anonymous packet.

The

The hand in which the direction was written was unknown to him ; but the post-mark told him enough. He opens it with precipitation ; he discovers the purse which he had given Bazil, with the fifty louis which he had left in it, and two like sums which he had sent to him. " I see the whole affair," said he : " I have been discovered. The father in indignation sends me back my presents.—— Haughty and severe, as I perceived him. As soon as he knew where his daughter was, he came to fetch her, and forced her to follow him." That moment he assembles such of his domestics as attended Lauretta. He examines them, he asks if any one among them had not seen with her a countryman, whom he describes to them. One of them actually remembers that, the very day that she went away, a man exactly like the person he describes got up to the boot of Lauretta's coach, and spoke to her for a moment. " Come quickly," cried Luzy, " put post-horses to my chaise !"

The second night, being arrived at some leagues from Coulange, he causes the servant who attended him to disguise himself like a peasant, sends him to get information, and in the mean while endeavours to take rest. Alas, there is none for the soul of a lover in so violent



lent a situation. He counts the minutes from the departure of his emissary to his return.

“Sir,” said the servant, “good news !
“Lauretta is at Coulange, at her father’s.”—
“Ah, I breathe again.”—“They talk even
“of marrying her.”—“Of marrying her !—
“I must see her.”—“You will find her in
“the vineyard : she works there all day.”—
“Just heaven ! what hardship ! Come, I will
“lie concealed ; and you, under that disguise,
“shall watch the moment when she is alone.
“Let us not lose an instant : away !”

Luzy’s emissary had told him truth. A rich person in his situation, had offered himself as a match for Lauretta : and the minister had sent to Bazil to persuade him to accept it.

In the mean time, Lauretta toiled in the vineyard, and thought of the unhappy Luzy. Luzy arrives, and perceives her at a distance : he advances with precaution, sees her alone, runs up, throws himself before her, and stretches out his arms. At the noise which he made across the vine-leaves, she raises her head, and turns her eyes ; “My God !” cried she . . . Surprise and joy took from her the use of her voice. She was in his arms all trembling, without having been able to mention his name. “Ah, Luzy,” said she, at last, “is it you ! This is what I asked of heaven.
“I am

"I am innocent in your eyes: that is enough;
"I will endure the rest. Adieu, Luzy, adieu
"for ever! Be gone; and lament your Lau-
"rette. She reproaches you with nothing.
"You will be dear to her to her last breath."
"I," cried he, locking her in his arms, as if
they were about to tear her from him again,
"I quit you! Thou half of myself, I live
"without thee, far from thee! No, there is
"not that power on earth that shall separate
"us." — "There is one which is sacred to
"me: the will of my father. Ah, my lost
"friend! If you had known the profound
"grief into which my flight plunged him,
"sensible and good as you are, you would
"have restored me to his tears. To take
"me away from him a second time, or to
"plunge a dagger into his bosom, would be
"to me the same thing. You know me too
"well to require it of me; you are too hu-
"mane to wish it yourself. Cast away a hope
"which I have lost, adieu. Heaven grant
"that I may expiate my fault! But I can
"scarce reproach myself for it. Adieu, I say,
"my father is coming: it would be dreadful
"that he should find us together." "It is
"what I would have," said Luzy: "I wait
"for him." — "Ah, you are now going to
"redouble my sorrows."

At

At that instant Basil arrives; and Luzy, advancing some paces to meet him, throws himself at his feet. "Who are you? What do you want?" said Basil, astonished at first. But as soon as he had fixed his eyes on him, "Wretch!" cried he, drawing back, "be gone, take yourself away from my sight."—"No, I shall die at your feet, if you will not vouchsafe to hear me."—"After having ruined, dishonoured the daughter, dare you present yourself to the father!"—"I am to blame, I confess, and here are the means to punish me," said he, presenting his sword. "But if you will hear me, I hope that you will have compassion on me."—"Ah," said Basil, looking at the sword, if I were as base, as cruel as you! . . . See," said he to his daughter, "how groveling is vice, and how great the shame of it, since it obliges a man to crouch at the feet of his fellow-creature, and to sustain his contempt." "If I were only vicious," replied Luzy haughtily, "far from imploring you, I should brave you. Attribute my humiliation only to that which is the most honest and most noble cause in nature, to love, to virtue itself, to the desire which I have of expiating a fault, excusable perhaps, and with which I reproach myself so cruelly, only because I have a good heart," Then, with

with all the eloquence of sentiment, he endeavoured to justify himself, attributing the whole to the warmth of youth, and the intoxication of passion.

“The world is very happy,” replied Bazil, “that your passion has not been that of money! You would have been a Cartouche. (Luzy chafed at this discourse.) Yes, a Cartouche. And why not? Will you have the meanness to think that innocence and honour are of less value than riches and life? Have you not availed yourself of the weakness, the infirmity of this unhappy girl, in order to rob her of these two treasures? And me, her father, do you think you have done me a less injury, than if you had murdered me? A Cartouche is broken on the wheel, because he steals riches, with which we may dispense; but for you, who have taken from us what a well-educated girl, what a virtuous father cannot lose without dying, what have you merited? They call you noble, and you believe yourself so. These are the marks of that nobility of which you are so vain. At a time of distress, when the most wicked of mankind would have had pity on me, you accost me, you pretend to pity me, and you say in your heart, “There now is a wretch who has no other consolation in the world but
“his

“ his daughter : she is the only blessing
“ heaven has left him ; and to-morrow I will
“ carry her away from him.” Yes, barbarian !
“ yes, villian ! this is what passed in your soul.
“ And I, poor credulous fool, I admired you,
“ loaded you with blessings, and prayed heaven
“ to accomplish all your wishes ; while
“ all your wishes were to seduce my daughter !
“ What do I say, wretch as I am ! I delivered
“ her up to you, I engaged her to run after
“ you, in truth to restore to you that gold,
“ that poison, with which you thought to
“ corrupt me : it seemed as if heaven had
“ warned me that it was a destructive and
“ treacherous gift ; I resisted the impulse, and
“ forced myself to believe you compassionate
“ and generous ; you were only perfidious
“ and unpitying ; and the hand which I
“ would have kissed, which I would have
“ watered with my tears, was preparing to
“ pluck out my heart. Behold,” continued
he, baring his bosom, and showing his scars,
“ behold what a man you have dishonoured !
“ I have shed, for my country, more blood
“ than you have in all your veins : and you,
“ Sir, what are your exploits ? Distressing a
“ father, and debauching his daughter ! em-
“ poisoning my days and hers. See there the
“ unhappy victim of your seduction, see her
“ there steeping in her tears her daily bread.
“ Brought

"Brought up in the simplicity of an innocent and laborious life, she loved it; she now detests it: you have rendered insupportable labour and poverty to her: she has lost her joy with her innocence, and she can no longer lift up her eyes without blushing. But that which distracts me, that which I will never forgive you, is, that you have shut the heart of my daughter against me; you have extinguished the sentiments of nature in her soul: you have made the company of her father a torment to her; perhaps, alas! . . . I dare not speak it . . . perhaps I am her aversion."

"Ah, my father!" cried Lauretta, who till then had remained in dejection and confusion. "Ah, my father! this is punishing me too much. I merit every thing except the reproach of having ceased to love you." On saying these words, she fell at his feet, and kissed the dust of them. Luzy prostrated himself before him, and in an excess of tenderness, "My father," said he "pardon her, pardon me, embrace your children; and if the ravisher of Lauretta be not too unworthy of the name of her husband, I conjure you to grant me that title."

This return would have softened a harder heart than Basil's. "If there were," said he to Luzy, "any other way of restoring to
" me

“ me my honour, and to both of you your
“ innocence, I would refuse this. But it is
“ the only one ; I accept it, and much more
“ for your sakes than for my own ; for I nei-
“ ther expect, and will have nothing from
“ you, and will die in cultivating my vine-
“ yard.”

The love of Luzy and Lauretta was conse-
crated at the foot of the altar. Many people
said that he had not a mean thing, and he
agreed to it : “ But it is not,” said he, “ that
“ which they attribute to me. The shame
“ was in doing the wrong, and not in re-
“ pairing it.”

There was no way of engaging Bazil to
quit his humble habitation. After having
tried every art to draw him to Paris, Madam
de Luzy obtained of her husband to purchase
an estate near Coulange, and the good father
consented at last to go there and spend his old
age.

Two hearts formed for virtue were ravished
in having recovered it. That image of ce-
lestial pleasures, the agreement of love and in-
nocence, left them nothing more to desire, but
to see the fruits of so sweet an union. Heaven
heard the wish of nature ; and Bazil, before
he died, embraced his grand-children.

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Sharp sculp

A WIFE OF TEN THOUSAND.

A

WIFE OF TEN THOUSAND.

“ENJOY, Madam, all the comforts of
“your house; do the honours, and be the
“delight of it; but never trouble your head
“about the conduct of it.” This, near
eight years ago, was the language of the
haughty Melidor to his wife. The advice was
agreeable to follow; and accordingly the
young and lively Acelia had pretty well fol-
lowed it. But reason came with age; and
the kind of intoxication, in which she had
been plunged, vanished.

Melidor had had the misfortune of being
born in opulence. Brought up among the
young nobility of the kingdom, invested on
entering into the world with a considerable
charge, master of his wealth from the age of
reason, it became to him the age of follies.
His prevailing foible was to want to live like
a man of quality. He made himself familiar
with the great, carefully studied their manners;
and as the noble and simple graces of a true
courtier are not easy to imitate, it was to the

airs of our little lords that he attached himself, as to good models.

He would have thought it a disgrace not to have been able to say, *My domains, and my vassals* : he laid out, therefore, the better part of his ready money in the purchase of lands, the revenue of which was small indeed, but the rights whereof were magnificent.

He had heard say, that the great lords had stewards who robbed them, creditors whom they did not pay, and mistresses who were not very faithful ; he considered it, therefore, as beneath him to look into his accounts, to pay his debts, or to be delicate in love.

His eldest son had scarce attained his seventh year ; he took particular care to choose him a governor that was self-sufficient and a coxcomb, who had no other merit than that of making a handsome bow.

This governor was the dependent of an humble friend of Melidor's, called Duranson, naturally an insolent, low fellow, a kind of dog, who barked at all passers-by, and caressed only his master. The part he acted was that of a misanthrope, full of arrogance and moroseness. Rich, but covetous, he found it convenient to have a good house which was not his own, and pleasures of every sort of which another bore the expence. A silent observer of all that passed, one might see him

sunk in his armed chair, deciding on every thing with a few cutting words, and setting himself up as a family-censor. Woe to the good man who was not an object of fear! He tore him to pieces without mercy, if his air had displeased him ever so little.

Melidor took the moroseness of Duranson for philosophy. He was conscious that he was his hero; and the incense of a man of his character was to him a delicate perfume. The rough flatterer took care not to expose himself to the world. If he applauded Melidor in publick, it was only with a glance, or a complaisant smile: he kept his panegyrick for a *tête-à-tête*; but then he gave him a full meal of it. Melidor could scarce believe himself endowed with such eminent merit; but there must be something in it, for his friend Duranson, who assured him of it, was the farthest in the world from being a nauseous flatterer.

It was not enough to please the husband; Duranson had also flattered himself with seducing the young wife. He began by speaking well of her alone, and very ill of all others of her age and condition. But she was as little touched with his satires as his encomiums. He suspected that he was despised; he endeavoured to make himself dreaded, and by some malignant and sharp strokes he made

her perceive that it was at any time in his power to be severe even on herself. That succeeded no better. "I may have foibles," said she to him, "and I allow them to be attacked, but at a little more distance, if you please. A perpetual censor would be almost as tiresome to me as a servile flatterer."

By the resolute tone which she assumed, Duranson saw plainly that, in order to reduce her, he must go a little farther about. "Let me endeavour," said he, "to make her stand in need of me: let me afflict her in order to console her; and when her wounded vanity shall throw her off her guard, I will seize one of those moments of disgust. The confident of a woman's sorrows is often the happy avenger of them."

"I pity you, Madam," said he, "and I ought no longer to conceal from you what afflicts me sensibly. For some time past Melidor goes astray; he is guilty of follies; and if he goes on in this manner, he will no longer have occasion for such a friend as myself."

Whether it was levity, or dissimulation with a man whom she did not esteem, Acelia received this information without deigning to appear moved. He dwelt upon it, made a merit

merit of his own zeal, and declaimed against the caprices and irregularities of husbands of the age ; said that he had made Melidor blush at it ; and opposing the charms of Acelia to the dowdies which touched her husband, he grew so very warm, that he forgot his part, and soon betrayed himself. She smiled with disdain at the knave's want of address. "That is what I call a friend," said she: "and not those base adulators, whom vice keeps in pay in order to flatter and serve it. I am very sure, for example, that you have told Melidor to his face all that you have just now said to me."—"Yes, Madam, and a great deal more."—"You will then, to be sure, have the courage to reproach him with his wrongs before me ; to overwhelm him with them."—"Before you, Madam ! Ah, beware of making a noise : that would be to alienate him irrecoverably. He is proud, he would be hurt at having cause to blush before you. He would consider me only as a perfidious friend. And who knows to what hidden motive he would impute our correspondence ?"—"No matter ; I will convict him, and confront him in you with a witness whom he cannot disprove."—"No, Madam, no, you will be undone. It is by dissembling wrongs that a woman governs: discretion, gentleness

“and your charms, these are your advantages
“over us. Complaint and reproach only
“serve to exasperate us ; and of all the
“methods of correcting, the worst is to put
“us to confusion.” He was in the right,
but to no purpose. Acelia would hear
nothing. “I know,” said she, “all my
“risk ; but though it were to come to a rup-
“ture, I would not act, by my silence, the
“convenient woman to my husband.” He
strove in vain to dissuade her ; he was reduced
to ask her pardon, and to entreat her not to
punish him for a zeal which, perhaps, was
imprudent. “And this then,” said Acelia,
“is that courageous freedom of yours which
“nothing can intimidate ? I shall be more
“discreet than you : but remember, Du-
“ranson, never hereafter to say any thing of
“your friends that you would not have them
“hear again. As to me, whatever injury
“my husband does me, I forbid you ever to
“speak to me about it.”

Duranson, enraged at so scurvy a reception,
vowed the destruction of Acelia ; but it was
necessary first to involve her in the ruin of
her husband.

No body at Paris has so many friends as an
opulent and prodigal man. Melidor’s friends,
at his suppers, never failed to commend him
to his face, and they had the kindness to wait
till

till they were withdrawn from table, before they ridiculed him. His creditors, who daily increased, were not so complaisant; but his friend Duranson kept off the throng. He knew, he said, the way to impose on those knaves. However, as they were not all equally timid, there was a necessity from time to time, in order to appease the most turbulent, to have recourse to expedients; and Duranson, under a fictitious name, coming to the succour of his friend, lent him money on pledges on the most usurious contracts.

The more Melidor's affairs became disordered, the less he wished to hear of them. "Manage it," said he to his steward, "I will sign, but leave me at peace. At last the steward came to tell him that his capital was exhausted, and his effects were going to be seised. Melidor fell on his agent, and told him he was a rogue. "Call me what you please," replied the cool steward; "but you are in debt, and must pay, and because you fail, they are going to sue you."

Melidor ordered the faithful Duranson to be called, and asked him if he had no resource. —"You have one very sure one: let your wife engage herself.—" Ah! but will she consent to it?"—"To be sure! can she hesitate, when your honour is at stake? However, do not alarm her; treat the matter

“ as a trifle, and let her see in this engage-
“ ment nothing more than a common form,
“ which she cannot avoid fulfilling.” Meli-
dor embraced his friend, and repaired to his
wife.

Acelia, wholly devoted to her amusements,
knew nothing of what passed. But happily
heaven had endued her with a just way of
thinking, and a firm soul. “ I am just come,
“ Madam,” said her husband, “ from seeing
“ your new carriage: it will be exquisite.
“ your new horses are arrived: Ah, my dear,
“ what a beautiful set! the Count de Pisa
“ trains them. They are full of spirit; but
“ he will break them: he is the best driver
“ in all Paris.”

Though Acelia was accustomed to the
galantries of her husband, she could not help
being surprised and pleased with this last.
“ I ruin you!” said she.—“ Prithee, my dear,
“ what better use can I make of my fortune
“ than to employ them in what pleases you?
“ Give a loose to your desires, and enjoy
“ them at your ease. I have nothing which
“ is not at your service; and I flatter myself
“ that you think so. A propos,” added he
carelessly, “ I have some deeds to settle,
“ which the common forms of business will
“ require you to sign. But we will talk of
“ that this evening. At present I can think
“ of

“ of nothing but the colour of your carriage ;
“ the varnisher only waits for your direc-
“ tions.” “ I will consider of it,” said she ;
and as soon as he was gone, she fell into re-
flexions on what had passed between them.

Acelia was a rich heiress, and the law
secured her the disposal of her fortune. She
perceived the consequences of the engagement
proposed to her ; and in the evening, instead
of going to the play, she went to her attorney.
What was her surprise, on learning that Me-
lidor was reduced to the most ruinous expedi-
ents ! She employed the time of the play in
getting intelligence and advice.

At her return she concealed her uneasiness
before the company at supper ; but when her
husband, *tête-à-tête* with her, proposed to her
to engage for him, “ I will not abandon
you,” said she, “ if you will deign to trust
“ yourself to me ; but I require an entire con-
“ fidence, a full power of ruling my house.”

Melidor was humbled at the thought of
having his wife for a tutor : he told her that
she had no reason to be alarmed, and that he
would not suffer her to take so disagreeable
a charge upon herself.—“ No, Sir, I have
“ neglected it too long : it is a fault which I
“ will no longer be guilty of.” He gave up
the point, and the creditors being assembled
the next day, “ Gentlemen,” said he to

them, "your visits are troublesome to me; " my wife would be glad to talk with you; " see and settle with her." "Gentlemen," said Acelia to them in a prudent, but assured tone, "though my estate be my childrens, I " am sensible that I ought to assist their father " with it; but I will have it done fairly. " Those who are honest shall find me punctual; " but I will not satisfy knaves for the follies " of a spendthrift. Bring me your demands " to-morrow. I require only time to examine " them; I will not let you wait."

From the moment that Acelia saw herself at the head of her house, she was no longer the same woman. She cast her eyes on her past life, and saw nothing in it but the flutter of a thousand idle occupations. "Are these," said she, "the duties of a mother of a family? Is it then at the price of her honour " and of her peace, that she must pay for " handsome suppers, rich equipages, and brilliant trifles?"

"Sir, said she to her husband, "to-morrow I shall have the state of your debts; I " must have that of your revenues: order " your steward to come to me." The steward came and gave in his accounts. Nothing was more clear: far from having money in hand, it was found that he had advanced, and there was due to him above double the amount
of

of his accumulated wages. "I see," said Acelia, "that the steward understands his accounts better than we do. We have nothing to do but to pay him, thanking him at the same time that we are not more in his debt."—"To pay him!" said Melidor in a low voice; "and with what?"—"Out of my fund. The first step in œconomy is to turn off the steward."

A reform was instantly made in the household, and in the expense; and Acelia setting the example, "Courage, Sir," said she, "let us cut to the quick: we sacrifice only our vanity."—"But decency, Madam?"—"Decency, Sir, consists in not dissipating the substance of another, and the innocent enjoyment of one's own."—"But Madam, at discharging your people you pay them; and that is exhausting our only resource."—"Be easy, my dear: I have trinkets and diamonds; and by sacrificing only these ornaments, I make myself one which is well worth them all."

Next day the creditors arrive, and Acelia gives them audience. Those of whom Melidor had purchased moveables of value, or superfluous knick-knacks, consented to take them back again, with a fair allowance. The rest, enchanted with the reception and good intentions of Acelia, unanimously agreed to abide

by her decisions ; and her conciliatory graces united all minds.

One alone, with an air somewhat confused, said that he could not abate any thing. He had valuable effects in pledge ; and on the list of monies borrowed, he was set down for an enormous usury. Acelia detained him by himself, in order to bend him if possible. “ I, “ Madam ! ” said he, pressed by her reproaches ; “ I come not here on my own account ; “ and M. Duranson had better have excused “ me from playing this villainous part.” — “ Duranson, say you ! What ! it is he who “ under your name . . . ” “ He himself.” — “ So our pledges are in his hands.” — “ Yes, “ and a writing from me, in which I declare “ there is nothing due to me.” — “ And may “ I have a duplicate of that writing ? ” — “ Certainly, and presently if you will, for “ the name of an usurer sits heavy on me.” This was a weapon for Acelia ; but it was not yet time to enlighten Melidor, and incense Duranson. She thought it necessary to dissemble some time longer.

Her lawyer, who came to see her, found that in twenty-four hours she had laid by a good part of her revenue, and discharged a multitude of debts. “ You proceed,” said he, “ upon good principles. Economy is of “ all resources the most sure, and the easiest.

“ It

“ It enriches one in an instant with all the
“ wealth that has been dissipated.”

While they were discoursing, Melidor in confusion afflicted himself at seeing his house stripped. “ Nay, Sir,” said his wife, “ console yourself : I retrench nothing but your
“ follies.” But he considered only the world, and the humiliation of a fall. He retired in consternation, leaving Acelia with her lawyer.

A young woman has in business a prodigious advantage : besides inspiring hope and the desire of pleasing, she interests, and disposes to a kind of easiness which men have not for one another. Nature contrives a secret intelligence between the two sexes. Every obstacle is removed before them, every difficulty vanishes : and instead of treating one another as enemies, like man to man, with a woman we deliver ourselves up as friends. Acelia was more than once a proof of it ; and her lawyer exerted a zeal and affection in serving her, which he would not have had for her husband.

“ Madam,” said he to her, on stating the balance of Melidor’s estate with his debts,
“ I find enough to acquit them. But effects
“ sold in a hurry commonly go at a low price.
“ Let us suppose that his are free : they will
“ more than answer the two hundred thousand crowns which he owes ; and if you
“ will engage yourself for him, it is not impossible
“ possible

“ possible to reduce this multitude of ruinous debts to a small number of more simple and less burthensome articles.” “ Do it, Sir,” said Acelia, “ I consent : I engage myself for my husband ; but let it be without his knowledge.” The lawyer acted with prudence ; and Acelia was authorised to contract in Melidor’s name.

Melidor had acted openly with her in every article but one, which he had not dared to declare to his wife. In the night Acelia hearing him groan, endeavoured tenderly to comfort him. “ You do not know all,” said he ; and these words were followed with a profound silence. Acelia pressed him in vain ; shame stopped his mouth. “ What !” said she, “ have you sorrows which you dare not confide to me ! have you a friend more tender, more sure, more indulgent ?” “ The greater right you have to my esteem,” replied Melidor, “ the more I ought to blush at the confession which I have yet to make to you. You have heard of the courtesan Eleonora . . . What shall I say to you ? She has notes from me for upwards of fifty thousand crowns.” Acelia saw with joy the moment to regain the heart of her husband.— “ It is not a time for reproaching you,” said she, “ with a folly of which you are ashamed, and to which my own dissipation has, per-
haps,

“ haps exposed you. Let us repair and for-
“ get our wrongs; this last is not without re-
“ medy.” Melidor had no conception that a
woman, till that time so full of levity, should
all of a sudden have acquired so much con-
sideration. Acelia was not less surprised that
a man, so haughty and vain, should suddenly
become so modest. “ May it not be happy
“ for us,” said they to each other, that we
“ have fallen into misfortune ?”

The next day Acelia, having considered
well, went in person to Eleonora’s. “ You
“ know not,” said she to her, “ who is come
“ to see you ? It is a rival.” And without
any further preparation she told her name.—
“ Madam,” said Eleonora, “ I am con-
“ founded at the honour you do me. I am
“ sensible I have done you wrong; but my
“ condition must be my excuse. Melidor is
“ to blame, and on seeing you I blame him
“ myself: he is more unjust than I imagined.”
“ Madam,” said Acelia, “ I complain nei-
“ ther of you nor of him. It is a punishment
“ due to a thoughtless woman to have a liber-
“ tine husband; and I have at least the plea-
“ sure of seeing that Melidor has still some
“ delicacy in his taste. You have under-
“ standing, and appearance of decency and
“ graces worthy to embellish virtue.”——
“ You view me, Madam, with too much
“ indulgence ;

“indulgence; which convinces me of the
“truth of what has been often told me, that
“the most virtuous women are not those who
“are most severe on us. As they have no-
“thing to envy us, they have the goodness to
“pity us. Those who resemble us are much
“more rigid! they tear us to pieces, while
“they imitate us.” “I will tell you,” re-
plied Acelia meaning to bring her to her pur-
pose, “what we blame most in persons of
“your way of life; it is not that weakness
“of which so many women have cause to
“blush, but a passion still more odious.—
“The fire of youth, the relish of pleasures,
“the attraction of a voluptuous and uncon-
“fined life, sometimes even sentiment itself,
“for I can believe you susceptible of it, all
“this may have its excuse: but in re-
“nouncing the modesty of a woman, you
“are at least the more obliged to have that
“of a man: and is there not a kind of
“honesty which you do not renounce?”
—“Yes without doubt.”—“Very well; tell
“me then, does that honesty permit you to
“make an ill use of the intoxication and folly
“of a lover, to such a degree as to require,
“and to accept of his mad engagements,
“that are ruinous to his family? Melidor,
“for example, has given you notes for fifty
“thousand crowns; and do you perceive the
“consequence

“ consequence of them, and how much room
“ there is to be severe against such a seduc-
“ tion ?” — “ Madam,” replied Eleonora, it
“ was a voluntary gift ; and M. Duranson
“ can witness for me that I have refused much
“ larger.” — “ You know M. Duranson ?” —
“ Yes, Madam ; it was he that put Melidor
“ into my hands ; and I was willing on that
“ account to acquit him of all his own
“ promises.” — “ Very well : he has set down
“ his own article then to his friend’s ac-
“ count.” — “ He told me so, and I imagined
“ that Melidor had approved of it. As to the
“ rest, Melidor was at his own liberty ; I
“ have nothing of his but what he has given
“ me, and nothing in my opinion can be
“ more fairly acquired.” — “ You think so ;
“ but would you think so, if you were the
“ child that is stripped for it ? Put yourself
“ in the place of a mother of a family, whose
“ husband ruins her in this manner ; who
“ is on the point of seeing him dishonoured,
“ pursued, driven from his house, de-
“ prived of his estate, obliged to conceal
“ himself from the eyes of the world, and to
“ leave his wife and children a prey to shame
“ and grief ; put yourself for one moment in
“ the place of that miserable and distressed
“ woman, and judge yourself, in that con-
“ dition.

“ dition. What steps would not you take,
“ Mademoiselle? You would without doubt
“ have recourse to the laws which superintend
“ our morals. Your complaints, and your
“ tears would put in their claim against an
“ odious surprise, and the voice of nature
“ and of equity would rise up in your favour.
“ Yes, Mademoiselle, the laws would rage
“ against poison; and the gift of pleasing is
“ poison, when we make an ill use of it. It
“ attacks not life; but it attacks reason and
“ honour; and if, in the intoxication which
“ it occasions, mad sacrifices are required
“ and obtained of a man, what you call free
“ gifts are in reality robberies. This is what
“ any other would say, what you would say
“ perhaps in my place yourself. But I am
“ more moderate. There is somewhat due to
“ you; I am come to pay you: but nobly,
“ and not madly. It is six months that Me-
“ lidor has been your lover, and in giving
“ you a thousand guineas you will confess
“ that he is magnificent.” Eleonora, softened
and confounded, had not the courage to refuse.
She took Melidor’s notes, and followed Acelia
to her lawyer.

“ Would not you like,” said Acelia to her,
on arriving there, “ an annuity of a hundred
“ guineas, rather than this sum in hand,
“ which will soon be dissipated? The way to
“ detach

“ detach one’s-self from vice, child, is to set
“ one’s-self above want : and I am of opinion,
“ that you will one day be glad to have it in
“ your power to be virtuous.”

Eleonora kissing Acelia’s hand, and letting
fall some tears, “ Ah, Madam,” said she,
“ under your features how amiable and touch-
“ ing is virtue ! If I have the happiness to re-
“ turn to it, my heart will owe that return
“ to you.”

The lawyer, charmed with Acelia, informed her that the two hundred thousand crowns were ready in his hands, and that they waited her orders. She departed transported with joy, and on seeing Melidor again, “ There
“ are your notes,” said she ; “ it was very
“ hard to part with them. Write no more so
“ tender ! His friend Duranson was present ;
and by the dull air of Melidor, she plainly saw
that he had made him ashamed of having resigned himself to his wife. “ You receive
“ them very coldly,” said she to her husband,
“ considering they come from so dear a hand.”
—“ Would you have me, Madam, rejoice at
“ being the talk of all Paris ? They speak of
“ nothing but my ruin ; and you make it so
“ very public, that my friends themselves
“ are not able to deny it.” — “ Your friends
“ then, Sir, had some way of remedying it
“ without noise ? They are come probably to
“ offer

“ offer you their credit, and their good
“ offices ? M. Duranson, for example”
“ I, Madam ! I can do nothing ; but I think
“ that without such a disgraceful publication,
“ it would have been easy to find resources.”
“ Yes, resources which leave none ? My
“ husband has made too much use of them :
“ you know it better than any body. As for
“ the disgrace which you affix to the publica-
“ tion of our misfortune, I know how great
“ your delicacy is, and I esteem it as I ought.”
—“ Madam ! I am an honest man, and it is
“ well known.”—“ It ought to be known, for
“ you tell all the world of it ; but as Melidor
“ will have no more love-intrigues to form,
“ your honesty grows useless.” Melidor, at
these words, took fire himself, and told his
wife, that it was an affront to him to insult his
friend. She was about to answer, but without
deigning to hear her, he retired in a rage, and
Duranson followed him.

Acelia was not the least shaken by this ;
and leaving them to conspire together, devoted
herself entirely to the care of her family. Her
son's governor, since their failure, thought
his office beneath him, and plainly told them
his mind. He was discharged that very even-
ing, and in his place came a good abbè, simple,
modest, and sufficiently learned, whom she
entreated

entreated to be their friend, and to infuse his own morals into his pupil.

Melidor, whom Duranson had taught to consider the ascendant which his wife had assumed, as the utmost mortification, was incensed at hearing that the governor was discharged. "Yes, Sir," said she to him, "I give my son the example and direction of a wise man instead of a coxcomb ; I mean also to rid you of an insolent parasite, who makes you pay for his pleasures. These are the injuries I do you, I confess them, and you may make them public." "It is odious," replied Melidor, without listening to her, "it is odious to avail yourself of the condition to which I am reduced, to prescribe laws to me. No, Madam, my misfortune is not such as to degrade me into your slave. It was your duty to enter into the engagement which I proposed to you : you have declined it ; you are no longer dear to me, and your cares are useless. If I have run out, it was for you : the only remedy to my misfortune, is to remove the cause, and to-morrow we separate." — "No, Sir, this is not the proper juncture. In a little time you shall peaceably enjoy a reputable fortune ; you shall be free, and easy, and happy. Then, after having re-established your honour, and your
" peace,

“ peace, I shall see whether I ought to give
“ place to the workers of your ruin, and to
“ leave you, by way of punishment, at the
“ brink of the abyss, whence I am now going
“ to draw you. Till then we are inseparable,
“ and my duty and your misfortune are in-
“ violable ties to me. For the rest, you shall
“ judge to-morrow what a man he is whom
“ you prefer to me. I will give you proofs
“ of his perfidy, before his face, and I re-
“ nounce all claim to your esteem, if he
“ dares disavow them.”

Melidor, shaken by the generous firmness of Acelia, was distracted all night between anger and gratitude. But in the morning he received a letter, which threw him into despair. They writ to him, that nothing was talked of at court but his luxury, his extravagance, and the misfortune which was the fruit of it ; that every body blamed him loudly ; and that they proposed nothing less than to oblige him to quit his charge. “ Read,” said he, on seeing Acelia, “ read, Madam, and tremble
“ at the condition to which you have reduced
“ me.” “ Oh, my friend,” said he to Duranson, who arrived just at that instant, “ I
“ am undone : you foretold it to me. The
“ bustle she has made dishonours me. They
“ are taking away my place.” Duranson pretended to be overcome with the news.—

“ Be

“Be not afraid,” said Acelia to him; “your security is good. You will lose nothing by it, but the monstrous usury which you would extort from your friend.” “Yes, Melidor, he is our usurer, our lender upon pledges.”—“I, Madam!”—“Yes, Sir, you yourself, and I have the proof in my hands.” “There it is,” said she to her husband; “but this is not all; this worthy friend made you pay Eleonora for the favors which he had received from her; he had the presumption to want to seduce your wife, by informing her of your amours, at the same time that he ruined you under a borrowed name.” “Ah, this is too much,” said Duranson, and he rose to depart. “One word more,” said Acelia to him. “You shall be unmasked in an hour, known by the city and the court, and marked every where with infamy, if you do not, this very instant carry to my lawyer’s, where I am going to wait for you, both the pledges and the notes which you have of Melidor’s.” Duranson turned pale, was confused, disappeared, and left Melidor confounded and immovable, with indignation and astonishment.

“Courage, my dear,” said Acelia to her husband. “I answer for laying the storm. Adieu. This evening it shall be appeased.”

She

She repairs to the attorney's, becomes bound, receives the two hundred thousand crowns, discharges his debts, tears the bills, beginning with those of Duranson, who had prudently done as he was ordered. From thence she takes a post-chaise, and repairs immediately to court.

The minister did not dissemble his discontent, nor the resolution which had been taken to oblige Melidor to sell his place. "I do not attempt to excuse him," said she: "Luxury is a folly in our situation, I confess; but it has been my folly rather than my husband's. His complaisance has been his only fault; and ah, Sir, what will not men do for a wife whom they love! I was young and handsome in his eyes; my husband consulted my desires rather than his own means; he knew no fear, nor misfortune, but that of displeasing me: this was his imprudence; it is now repaired: he owes nothing more than my portion, and I make him the sacrifice of it." — "What, Madam!" cried the minister, "have you become bound for him?" — "Yes, Sir, who ought to repair his misfortune, but she who occasioned it? Yes, Sir, I have engaged myself, but thereby I have acquired the right of managing his estate, and of ensuring my children's fortune. He does not know what I have done for him, and he
 "allows

“allows me full power to dispose of every
“thing. I am at the head of my family,
“and the whole of it is already reduced to the
“most severe æconomy. Here, in two
“words, is what I have done, and what I
“propose to do.” She then entered into some
details, which the minister was graciously
pleased to hear. “But,” continued she,
“the friendship, the esteem, the confidence of
“my husband, all is lost to me, if you punish
“him for a fault with which he must reproach
“me till I shall have effaced it. You are just,
“sensible, and humane: for what would you
“punish him? For having loved the other
“half of himself too much? for having for-
“got himself, and sacrificed himself for me?
“I shall then be odious to him; and he will
“have reason perpetually to repeat to my
“children the error and dishonour into
“which their mother shall have plunged him.
“To whom would you make satisfaction by
“punishing him? To the publick? Ah!
“Sir, it is an envious, wicked publick,
“unworthy of that complaisance. As to that
“part of the publick which is indifferent
“and just, leave us to give it a sight much
“more useful, and more touching, than that
“of our ruin. It shall see that a discreet
“woman can reclaim an honest husband, and
“that there are, to well-disposed hearts, in-

“ exhaustible resources in courage and virtue.
“ Our reformation will be an example; and
“ if it be honourable to us to set it, it will be
“ glorious to follow it; whereas, if the punishment of an imprudence which hurts us
“ alone, exceeds the fault, and survives it,
“ they will, perhaps, be incensed to no purpose, at seeing us unhappy without being
“ criminal,”

The minister listened with astonishment.
“ Far from being any obstacle to your intentions,” said he, “ Madam, I will second them, even in punishing your husband. He must renounce all title to his place.”—“ Ah, Sir !”—“ I have disposed of it in favour of your son, and it is out of regard, out of respect for you, that I leave the survivorship to the father.” Acelia’s surprise, at obtaining from the minister a favour instead of a punishment, made her almost fall at his feet. “ Sir,” said she to him, “ it is worthy yourself to correct, in this manner, the father of a family. The tears which you see flow, are the expression of my gratitude. My children, my husband, and myself, shall never cease to bless you.”

Melidor waited Acelia with terror; and uneasiness gave place to joy, when he learnt with what gentleness his dissipation was punished. “ Well,” said Acelia, embracing him,

him, "are we to part to-day? Have you still
"any good friend whom you prefer to your
"wife?"

It is well known with what ease reports in Paris are spread, and destroyed as soon as propagated: Melidor's misfortune had been the news of the day; his re-establishment, or rather the noble part which his wife had acted, caused a kind of revolution in people's minds, and in their conversation. They talked of nothing but the wisdom and resolution of Acelia; and when she appeared abroad, with the modest and free air of a person who neither braves nor fears the looks of the publick, she was received with a respect which she had never before inspired. It was then that she perceived the value of the consideration which virtue gives; and the homages which had been paid to her youth and beauty, had never flattered her so much.

Melidor, more timid, or more vain, knew not what air to assume, nor what countenance to wear. "Let us wear, said his wife, "the air of confessing frankly, that we have "been imprudent, and that we are become "discreet. Nobody has any thing to reproach us with; let us not humiliate ourselves. If they see us glad of being amended, they will esteem us the more."—"And "with what eyes," said he, "will you look

“ upon that multitude of false friends, who
“ have abandoned us ? ” — “ With the same
“ eyes that I have always seen them, as peo-
“ ple whom pleasure attracts, and who fly
“ away at its departure. What right had
“ you to depend upon them ? Was it for
“ them that your feasts were made ? The
“ house of a rich man is a theatre, in which
“ every one thinks he has paid for his place,
“ when he has filled it agreeably. The show
“ ended, every one retires, acquitted of all
“ demands on them. This is a disagreeable
“ reflection ; but in losing the illusion of
“ being loved, you convert an agreeable er-
“ ror into an useful experience. And it is
“ with this remedy, as with many others :
“ the bitterness forms its efficacy. View then
“ the world as it is, without being mortified
“ at having mistaken it, without boasting
“ that you know it better. Above all, let
“ nobody be informed of our little quarrels :
“ let neither of us seem to have given way to
“ the other : but let it appear, that the same
“ spirit animates and actuates us both.
“ Though it be not so great a shame as it is
“ accounted, to suffer one’s self to be guided
“ by a wife, I would not have them know
“ that it was I who determined you.”

Melidor owed every thing to his wife, but
nothing touched him so sensibly as this mark

of delicacy, and he was so ingenious as to confess it. Acelia had another view besides flattering the vanity of her husband. She wanted to engage him, by his vanity itself, to follow the plan which she had traced out to him. "If he sees all the world persuaded," said she, "that he has acted only according to his own pleasure, he will soon believe it himself, as well as the rest of the world: we stand to our own resolutions by this sentiment of liberty, which resists those of others; and the most essential point in the art of leading people, is that of concealing from them that they are led." Acelia took care, therefore, to reflect on her husband those praises which were bestowed on her; and Melidor, on his side, spoke of her with nothing but esteem.

However, she dreaded, on his account, the solitude and silence of her house. There is no keeping in a man who grows dull and weary; and before Melidor could fall into some employment, it was necessary he should have amusements. Acelia took care to form for him a society, not numerous but well-chosen. "I invite you not to feast," said she to the ladies whom she engaged; "but instead of pomp, we shall have pleasure. I will give you a hearty supper, which shall cost nothing; we will there drink in freedom to

“ the health of our friends ; perhaps, also, “ we shall laugh there, a circumstance uncommon enough in the world.” She kept her promise ; and her husband alone still regretted the opulence in which he had lived. Not that he did not try to accustom himself to a plain way of life ; but one would have thought that the same void had taken possession of his soul and of his house. His eyes and ears, habituated to tumult, were as it were stupefied with calm and repose. He still viewed with envy those who were ruining themselves, like himself ; and Paris, where he found himself condemned to privations, in the midst of enjoyments, became odious to him.

Acelia, who perceived it, and who pursued her plan with that constancy which is found only in women, proposed to him to go and see the lands which they had bought. But, before setting out, she charged her lawyer to hire her, instead of the hôtel which they occupied, a house genteely plain, to live in at their return.

Of three estates, which Melidor had, the two most honourable produced scarce a third of the interest of the purchase-money. It was resolved, therefore, that he should sell them. The other having been long neglected, required only improvement to become an excellent estate. “ This is the estate we must
“ keep,”

“keep,” said Acelia : “let us employ all our
“care in raising its value. It is a wholesome
“air, an agreeable prospect, and a fertile soil ;
“we will pass the pleasant part of the year
“there ; and, believe me, we will love one
“another there. Your wife will not have
“the airs, the caprices, the art of coquettes,
“but a sincere and tender friendship ; which
“will constitute, if you partake it, your hap-
“piness, mine, that of our children, and the
“joy of our family. I know not how it is,
“but since I breathe the air of the country,
“my pleasures are more simple and natural ;
“happiness seems more within my reach,
“more accessible to my desires ; I see it pure,
“and without clouds, in the innocence of
“rural manners ; and I have, for the first
“time, the idea of the serenity of an inno-
“cent life, which flows in peace to the very
“end.” Melidor heard his wife with com-
plaisance, and consolation diffused itself over
his soul like a delicious balm.

He consented, not without repugnance, to
the sale of those of his lands whose rights had
flattered him the most ; and the good lawyer
managed so well, that, in the space of six
months, Melidor found himself indebted to
nobody in the world.

Nothing now remained, but to strengthen
him against the bent of habit ; and Acelia,

who knew his foible, did not despair of extinguishing in him the relish of luxury, by a taste more discreet and satisfactory. The estate which they had reserved, presented a vast field for useful labours ; and Acelia bethought her of forming a little council of husbandmen for the direction of them. This council was composed of seven honest, sensible villagers, to whom she gave a dinner every Sunday. This dinner was called The Banquet of the seven Wise Men. The council was held at table, and Melidor, Acelia, and the little Abbè, assisted at the deliberations. The quality of soils, and the culture which suited them ; the choice of the plants and seeds, the establishment of new farms, and the division of the ground into woods, pasturages, and corn-fields ; the distribution of the flocks, destined for fattening and labour, the direction and employment of the waters, plantations and enclosures, and even the smallest particulars of rural œconomy were treated in the council. Our sages, glass in hand, animated and enlightened each other ; to hear them, one might have imagined that one saw treasures buried in the earth, which waited only for hands to come and dig them out.

Melidor was flattered with this hope, and above all with the kind of domination which he should exercise in the conduct of these labours ;

labours; but he did not think that he had means sufficient to carry them into execution. "Let us begin," said Acelia, "and the ground will assist us." They did but little the first year, but sufficient to give Melidor a fore-taste of the pleasure of creating.

The council, at Acelia's departure, received from her a small recompence, and the good grace with which she gave it, enhanced the value.

Melidor, on his return to town, was enchanted with his new house. It was commodious and pleasing, furnished without pomp, but with taste. "This, my dear, is what suits us," said his wife. "There is enough of it to be happy in it, if we are wise." She had the pleasure of seeing him grow dull at Paris, where he found himself confounded in the crowd, and sigh after the country, where the desire of reigning recalled him.

They went down there before the return of spring, and the sages being assembled, they regulated the labours of the year.

From the moment that Melidor saw the ground enlivened by his influence, and a multitude of people employed in fertilising it for him, he felt himself lifted above himself. A new farm, which he had established, was adjudged by the council, and Melidor had the sensible joy of seeing the first crop.

Their joy was renewed every day, on seeing those very fields, which two years before languished uncultivated. and unpeopled, covered with labourers and flocks, with woods, harvests, and herbage ; and Melidor saw, with regret, the arrival of the season which recalled him to Paris.

Acelia could not resist the inclination of visiting the minister, who, in her misfortune, had stretched out his hand to her. She gave him so touching a picture of the happiness which they enjoyed, that he was moved to the bottom of his soul. " You are," said he to her, " the model of women : may such an example make, on all hearts, the impression which it makes on mine. Go on, Madam, and depend on me. It is too much honour to be able to contribute to the happiness which you occasion."

That fortunate country, to which our couple were recalled by the fine weather, became a smiling picture of œconomy and abundance. But a picture, still more touching, was that of the education which they gave to their children.

They talked in the neighbourhood of a couple like themselves, withdrawn from the world, and who, in a pleasing solitude, made it their delight to cultivate the tender fruits of their love. " Let us go and see them," said

said Acelia, "let us go and take lessons from them." On arriving, they saw the image of happiness and of virtue, M. and Madam de Lisbé, in the midst of their young family, solely occupied with the care of forming the understanding and the heart.

Acelia was touched at the grace, the decency, and, above all, with the air of gaiety which she remarked in these children. They had neither the rustic bashfulness, nor the indiscreet familiarity of childhood. In their address, their conversation, their language, nothing appeared but a natural excellence; so very easy had habit rendered all the movements which it had directed.

"This is not a visit of ceremony," said Acelia to Madam de Lisbé; "we come to take instructions from you in the art of bringing up our children, and to entreat you to teach us the principles, and the method which you have followed with so much success."

"Alas, Madam, nothing is more plain," replied Madam de Lisbé. "Our principles consist in treating children as children, to make useful things a play to them; to make plain what we teach them, and to teach them only what they are able to conceive. Our method is equally simple: it consists in leading them to instruction by

“curiosity ; in concealing from them, under
“that allurements, the idea of labour and
“constraint, and in directing their very curi-
“osity, by certain thoughts thrown in their
“way, and which we give them an inclina-
“tion of seizing. The most difficult is that
“of exciting emulation without jealousy,
“and in that, perhaps, we have less merit
“than good fortune.” — “You have given
“them, without doubt, excellent masters?” —
“No, Madam, we learnt whatever we wished
“to teach them. See how the dove digests
“the nourishment of her young ones. Let
“us imitate her, and from thence result two
“advantages, and two pleasures : that of in-
“structing ourselves, and that of instructing
“our children.”

“This little labour is so much the more
“amusing,” said Monsieur de Lisbé, “as
“we have reserved all the abstracted studies
“for the age of reason, and as our lessons are,
“at present, confined to what falls beneath
“the senses. Childhood is the age in which
“the imagination is most lively, and the me-
“mory most docile ; it is to objects of these
“two organs that we apply the minds of our
“children. The surface of the ground is an
“image ; the history of men, and that of na-
“ture, are a succession of pictures : the natural
“philosophy of tongues is only sounds : the
“part

“part of the mathematics to be perceived by
“the senses is reduced to lines; all the arts
“may be described. Religion itself, and
“moral philosophy, are better learnt by our
“feelings than they are conceived in idea;
“in a word, all our simple and primitive per-
“ceptions come to us by the senses. Now, the
“senses of children have more fineness, deli-
“cacy, and vivacity, than those of maturer
“age. It is taking nature then in her
“strength, to take her in childhood, to per-
“ceive and seise every thing which requires
“not the combinations of the understanding;
“besides that the soul, free from all other
“care, is entirely at leisure to attend to this:
“that it is greedy of knowledge, exempt
“from prejudice, and that all the cells of the
“understanding and the memory being emp-
“ty, we range ideas there at pleasure, espe-
“cially if, in the art of introducing them, we
“follow their natural order, if we are not in
“too much haste to accumulate them, and if
“we give them leisure to settle themselves
“each in their place.”

“I see,” said Acelia, “but without terri-
“fying myself at it, that all this demands a
“continued attention.” “That attention,”
replied Madam de Lisbé, “has nothing con-
“straining nor painful. We live with our
“children, we have them under our eyes,
“we

“ we converse with them, we accustom them
“ to examine and to reflect, we assist them,
“ without impatience, in developing their
“ ideas, we never discourage them by a tone
“ of ill humour or contempt ; severity, which
“ is only of service to remedying the fault of
“ negligence, has scarce ever place in an un-
“ remitted education ; and as we do not suffer
“ nature to take any vicious bent, we are not
“ obliged to put it under constraint.”

“ Shall I not be indiscreet,” said Acelia to her, “ in testifying to you the desire I have of
“ being present at one of your lessons?” Madam de Lisbé called her children, who were employed together in a corner of the hall. — They flew to the arms of their mother with a natural joy, at which Acelia was touched. “ Children,” said the mother, “ the lady
“ would willingly hear you: we are going to
“ question each other.”

Acelia admired the order and clearness of the knowledge which they had acquired ; but she was still more enchanted at the grace and modesty with which they replied in their turns, at the good understanding which reigned among them, and at the lively interest which they took at the success of each other.

Acelia’s object was to interest Melidor in this sight, and he was moved even to tears. “ How happy are you,” said he continually,

to Madam de Lisbé, "how happy are you in
"having such children ! It is the sweetest of
"all enjoyments."

Acelia, on quitting her neighbours, requested their friendship; she embraced a thousand times their children, and prayed them to give her leave to come sometimes to instruct herself by their studies.

"What can be more astonishing, and more
"plain !" said she to Melidor, on going away.
"Can it be, that a pleasure so pure is so little
"known : and that what is most natural
"should be what is most uncommon ? People
"have children, and grow tired of them !
"and seek abroad for amusements, when they
"have such touching pleasures at home !"
"True," said Melidor ; "all children are
"not so well endowed." "And who has
"told us," replied Acelia, "that heaven has
"not granted us the same favour ? Ah, my
"dear, it is for the sake of sparing ourselves,
"that we so often reproach nature. We ge-
"nerally blame her, in order to justify our-
"selves. Before we have a right to think her
"incorrigible, we should have done every
"thing to correct her. We are neither weak
"nor wicked ; our children ought not to be
"so. Let us live with them, and for them ;
"and I promise you that they will resemble
"us."

"You

“ You are going to have two assistants,” said she in the evening to the Abbé. “ We have just had a foretaste of the pleasure of “ educating our children :” and she related what they had seen and heard. “ We would “ follow the same plan,” added she. “ You “ my good Abbé, you shall teach them the “ languages ; Melidor is going to apply himself to the study of the arts, and of nature, “ in order to be able to give lessons on them. “ I reserve to myself what is easiest and most “ simple, the manners, the objects of sentiment ; and I hope, in a year, to be able “ to keep pace with you. You must shew “ us the sources, and direct our studies, step “ by step, on the shortest plan.”

The Abbé applauded this emulation, and each of them set about filling his task with an ardour, which, far from weakening itself, only redoubled.

Melidor found no further vacancy in the leisure of the country. It seemed to him, as if time hastened his course. The days were not long enough to attend to the cares of agriculture, and the studies of the closet. One might have said, that these employments stole from one another. Acelia was divided, in like manner, between the cares of her household and the instruction of her children. Nature seconded her views. Her children, full of application

application and docile, whether by the example of their parents, or through a mutual emulation made their little exercises their diversion.

But this success, satisfying as it was to the heart of a good mother, was not her most serious object. She had ensured to Melidor the only inexhaustible resource against the dullness of solitude, and the attraction of dissipation. "I am easy," said she, "at last," when she saw in him a determined liking for study. "It is a pleasure which costs little; which we find every where, which never tires, and with which we are sure of not being obliged to fly ourselves."

Melidor restored to himself, far from being ashamed to confess that he owed his reformation to his wife, took a pride in relating all she had done to reclaim him from his errors: he ceased not to commend the courage, the understanding, the sweetness, the firmness she had mingled in it; and all the world, on hearing him, said, "*This is a Wife of Ten Thousand!*"

FRIENDSHIP PUT TO THE TEST.

IN one of those schools of morality to which the English youth go to study the duties of a man and a citizen, to enlighten the understanding and elevate the soul, Nelson and Blandford were distinguished by a friendship worthy of the first ages. As it was founded on a perfect agreement of sentiments and principles, time only served to confirm it; and the more it was enlightened every day, the more intimate it every day became. But this friendship was put to a test, which it had some difficulty to support.

Their studies being finished, each of them took to that way of life, to which nature invited him. Blandford, active, robust, and courageous, determined for the profession of arms, and for the sea-service. Voyages were his school. Inured to fatigues, instructed by dangers, he arrived, from rank to rank, to the command of a vessel.

Nelson, endowed with a manly eloquence, and of a genius wise and profound, was of the
number

number of those deputies, of whom the national senate is composed ; and in a short time he rendered himself famous there.

Thus each of them served his country, happy in the good which he did it : while Blandford sustained the shock of war, and of the elements, Nelson stood proof against favour and ambition. Examples of an heroic zeal, one would have thought that, jealous of each other, they contended for virtue and glory, or rather that, at two extremities of the world, the same spirit animated them both.

" Courage," said Nelson, in his letters to Blandford, " does honour to friendship, by preserving its country : live for the one, if it be possible, and die for the other, if there be occasion : a death, worthy of its tears, is more valuable than the longest life." " Courage," said Blandford, in his letters to Nelson, " defends the rights of the people and of liberty : a smile from one's country is of more value than the favour of kings."

Blandford enriched himself by doing his duty : he returned to London with the prizes he had taken on the Indian seas. But the most valuable part of his treasure was a young Indian, of a beauty that would have been uncommon in any climate. A Bramin, to whom heaven had given this only daughter in reward
for

for his virtues, had consigned her up, in his dying moments, to the hands of the generous Englishman.

Coraly had not yet attained her fifteenth year ; her father made her his delight, and the tenderest object of his cares. The village in which he dwelt was taken and pillaged by the English. Solinzeb (that was the Bramin's name) presents himself on the threshold of his habitation. " Hold !" said he to the soldiers, who were come quite up to his humble sanctuary, " hold ! Whoever you be, the God " of nature, the beneficent God, is yours and " mine : respect in me his minister."

These words, the sound of his voice, his venerable air, impress respect ; but the fatal stroke is given, and the Bramin falls mortally wounded into the arms of his trembling daughter.

At that instant Blandford arrives. He comes to repress the fury of the soldiery. He cries out, he makes a passage through them, he sees the Bramin leaning on a young girl scarce able to support him, and who, tottering herself, bathes the old man with her tears. At this sight, nature, beauty, love, exercise all their influence on Blandford's soul. He easily discovers in Solinzeb, the father of her who embraces him with such affectionate sorrow.

" Barbarians,"

"Barbarians," said he to the soldiers, "be gone! Is it feebleness and innocence, old age and childhood, that you ought to attack?" "Mortal, sacred to me," said he to the Bramin, "live, live, suffer me to repair the crime of those savages." At these words he takes him into his arms, makes him lie down, examines the wound, and procures him all the assistance of art. Coraly, witness to the piety, the sensibility of this stranger, thought she saw a God descended from heaven to succour and comfort her father.

Blandford, who did not quit Solinzeb, endeavoured to soften the sorrow of his daughter; but she seemed to have a presage of her misfortune, and passed the nights and days in tears.

The Bramin perceiving his end to approach, "I would fain," said he to Blandford, "go and die on the border of the Ganges, and purify myself in its waves." "Father," replied the young Englishman to him, "it would be easy to give you that consolation if all hope was lost. But wherefore add to the peril in which you are, that of so painful a removal? It is so far from hence to the Ganges! And then (be not offended at my sincerity) it is the purity of the heart which the God of nature requires; and if you have observed the law which he has
"engraven

“ engraven on our souls, if you have done
 “ mankind all the good that you have been
 “ able, if you have avoided doing them ill,
 “ the God who loves them will love you.”

“ Thou art full of consolation,” said the
 Bramin. “ But thou, who reducest the
 “ duties of mankind to a plain piety, and
 “ purity of manners, how can it be that
 “ thou art at the head of those robbers who
 “ ravage India, and who bathe themselves in
 “ blood ?”

“ You have seen,” said Blandford, “ whe-
 “ ther I authorise those ravages. Commerce
 “ draws us to India; and if men acted up-
 “ rightly, that mutual exchange of conve-
 “ niencies would be just and peaceable. The
 “ violence of your masters obliged us to take
 “ arms; and the transition is so quick from
 “ defense to attack, that at the first success,
 “ at the smallest advantage, the oppressed
 “ becomes the oppressor. War is a violent
 “ state, which it is not easy to soften : Alas!
 “ when man becomes unnatural, how can
 “ he be just ? It is my duty here to protect
 “ the commerce of the English, to make
 “ my country honoured and respected. In
 “ the discharge of this duty, I spare, as far as
 “ possible, the effusion of blood and tears
 “ which war occasions ; happy if the death
 “ of a good man, the death of Coraly’s
 “ father,

"father, be one of those crimes and misfortunes which I am destined to save the world!" Thus spoke the virtuous Blandford, and embraced the old man.

"Thou wouldest persuade me," said Solinzeb, "that virtue is every where the same. But thou believest not in the God Vistnou and his nine metamorphoses: how can a good man refuse his assent to them?" "Father," replied the Englishman, "there are millions of people upon the earth who have never heard either of Vistnou, or his adventures; for whom however the sun rises every day, who breathe a pure air, who drink wholesome waters, and to whom the earth lavishes the fruits of the seasons.— Would you believe it? There are among these people, as well as among the children of Brachma, virtuous hearts, and good men. Equity, candour, uprightness, beneficence and piety are in veneration among them, and even among the wicked. O my father! The dreams of the imagination differ according to climates, but the mind is every where the same, and the light which is its source is as widely diffused as that of the sun."

"This stranger enlightens and astonishes me," said Solinzeb within himself: "all that my heart, my reason, the inward voice

“voice of nature tell me to believe, he believes also; and of my worship he denies only that part which I have so much trouble myself not to deem absurd.” — “Thou thinkest then,” said he to Blandford, “that a good man may die in peace?” — “Certainly,” — “I think so too, and I wait death as a gentle sleep. But when I am gone, what will become of my daughter? I see nothing in my country but slavery and desolation. My daughter had only me in the world, and in a few moments I shall be no more.” “Ah!” said the young Englishman, “if to her misfortune death deprives her of a father, deign to confide her to my cares. I call heaven to witness that her chastity, innocence and liberty shall be a deposit guarded by honour, and for ever inviolable.” — “And in what principles shall she be brought up?” — “In your’s, if you please; in mine if you will allow me; but at all events in that modesty and virtue which are every where the glory of a woman.” “Young man,” replied the Bramin with an august and threatening air, “God has just heard thy words; and the old man with whom thou now speakest will perhaps in an hour be with him.” — “You have no need,” said Blandford to him, “to make me perceive the sacredness of my
“ promises.

“promises. I am but a feeble mortal ; but
“nothing under heaven is more immoveable
“than the honesty of my heart.” He spoke
these words with such firmness, that the
Bramin was penetrated with them. “Come,
“Coral,” said he to his daughter, “come,
“embrace thy dying father : let him be,
“after me, thy guide and thy support.”
“There, my daughter,” added he, “is the
“book of the law of thy forefathers, the
“*Veidam* : after having well meditated on it,
“suffer thyself to be instructed in the creed of
“this virtuous stranger, and choose that of
“the two forms of worship which shall seem
“to thee the most proper to make people
“virtuous.”

The night following the Bramin expired.
His daughter, who filled the air with her
cries, was not able to detach herself from that
livid and cold corpse which she watered with
her tears. At last, sorrow exhausted her
strength, and the attendants availed them-
selves of her fainting to carry her away from
the melancholy place.

Blandford, whom his duty recalled from
Asia to Europe, carried thither with him his
pupil ; and though she was beautiful and easy
to seduce, though he was young and strongly
taken, he respected her innocence. During
the voyage, he employed himself in teaching

her a little English, in giving her an idea of the manners of Europe, and in disengaging her docile mind from the prejudices of her country.

Nelson was gone to meet his friend. They saw each other again with the most sensible joy. But the first sight of Coraly struck and afflicted Nelson. "What do you do with "this girl?" said he to Blandford in a severe tone. "Is she a captive, a slave? Have you "carried her off from her parents? Have "you made nature mourn?" Blandford related what had passed; he gave him so touching a portrait of the innocence, candour, and sensibility of the young Indian, that Nelson himself was moved at it. "This is my design," continued Blandford: "at my mother's, and "under her eyes she shall be instructed in our "manners: I will form that simple and "docile heart; and if she can be happy with "me, I will marry her." — "I am easy, "and acknowledge my friend."

The surprises and different emotions of a young stranger, to whom every thing is new, have been often described; Coraly experienced them all. But her happy facility in seising, and comprehending every thing, even outstripped the pains which they took to instruct her. Genius, talents, and the graces, were in her innate gifts: they had only the trouble
of

of developing them by a slight culture. She was near sixteen, and Blandford was going to marry her, when death deprived him of his mother. Coraly lamented her as if she had been her own ; and the pains which she took to console Blandford, touched him sensibly.— But during the mourning, which retarded the nuptials, he had orders to embark on a new expedition. He went to see Nelson, and he confided to him, not the grief which he felt at quitting the young Indian ; Nelson would have made him blush at that ; but the grief of leaving her to herself, in the midst of a world which was unknown to her. “ If my mother,” said he, “ were still living, she would be her guide ; but the ill fortune which pursues this poor girl, has taken away from her her only support.” “ Have you then forgot,” said Nelson, “ that I have a sister, and that my house is your own ?” — “ Ah Nelson,” replied Blandford, fixing his eyes on his, “ if you knew what that charge is which you would have me confide to you !” At these words Nelson smiled with disdain. “ This uneasiness,” said he, “ is a fine compliment to us both. You dare not trust me with a woman !” Blandford, in confusion, blushed. “ Pardon my weakness :” said he, “ it made me see danger where thy virtue finds none. I

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“judged

“judged of your heart by my own: it is me
 “whom my fear humbles. Let us say no
 “more of it: I shall set out in peace, leaving
 “the pledge of my love under the guard of
 “friendship. But, my dear Nelson, if I die,
 “let me request you to take my place.”—
 “Yes, that of father, I promise you: ask
 “no more.” — “Enough: nothing further
 “detains me.”

The adieu of Coraly and Blandford were mingled with tears; but Coraly's tears were not those of love. — A lively gratitude, a respectful friendship were the tenderest sentiments which Blandford had inspired her with. Her own sensibility was not known to her: the dangerous advantage of unfolding it was reserved for Nelson.

Blandford was handsomer than his friend; but his figure, like his temper, had a manly and austere fierceness in it. The sentiments which he had conceived for his pupil seemed to have given him rather the disposition of a father than of a lover: his attentions were without complaisance, his goodness without charms, his concern tender, but solemn, and his desire was that of rendering her happy with him rather than of being happy with her.

Nelson, who was of a more engaging temper, had also more sweetness in his features,

features, and his language. His eyes especially, his eyes expressed the eloquence of the soul. His look, the most touching in the world, seemed to penetrate to the bottom of people's hearts, and to procure him a secret correspondence with them. His voice thundered when there was a necessity to defend the interests of his country, her laws, her glory, her liberty, but in familiar conversation it was full of sensibility and charms. What rendered him still more engaging, was an air of modesty diffused over his whole person. This man, who at the head of his nation would have made a tyrant tremble, was in company of a timid bashfulness: one single word of commendation made him blush.

Lady Juliet Albury, his sister, was a widow of great prudence, and an excellent heart; but of that kind of unhappy prudence which always anticipates misfortune, and accelerates instead of preventing it. It was she who was charged with consoling the young Indian. "I have lost my second father," said that amiable girl to her. "I have now only you and Nelson in the world. I will love you, I will obey you. My life and heart are yours." While she was yet embracing Juliet, Nelson arrives, and Coraly rises with a smiling and heavenly countenance, but still bedewed with tears.

"Well," said Nelson to his sister, "have
 "you consoled her a little?" "Yes, I am
 "consoled, I have no further complaint,"
 cried the young Indian, at the same time
 wiping her fine black eyes. Then making
 Nelson seat himself by the side of Juliet, and
 falling on her knees before them, she took
 them by their hands, put them one in the
 other, and pressing them tenderly in her own,
 "There is my mother," said she to Nelson,
 with a look which would have softened mar-
 ble: "and you, Nelson, what will you be to
 "me?—" "I, Madam? Your good friend."
 —"*My good friend!* that is charming! then I
 "shall be your good friend too? Give me only
 "that name."—"Yes, my good friend, my
 "dear Coraly, your frankness delights me."
 "My God," said he to his sister, "what a
 "beautiful girl! She will be the delight of
 "your life." "Yes, if she is not the misery
 "of yours," replied the provident sister.—
 Nelson smiled with disdain. "No," said he,
 "love never disputes in my soul the rights of
 "sacred friendship. Be easy, sister, and em-
 "ploy yourself in peace, in the care of culti-
 "vating this beautiful innocent. Blandford
 "will be enchanted with her, if, at his re-
 "turn, she is mistress of our language. For
 "we may perceive in her ideas, shadows of
 "sentiment, which she is unhappy at not
 "being

“being able to express. Her eyes, her gestures, her features, every thing about her proclaims ingenious thoughts, which only want words to call them forth. This sister will be an amusement to you, and you will see her mind open like a flower.” — “Yes my brother, as a flower with a multitude of thorns.”

Lady Albury constantly gave English lessons to her pupil, and the latter rendered them every day more interesting, by intermingling with them strokes of sentiment of a vivacity and delicacy which belongs only to pure nature. It was a triumph to her but to make discovery of a word, which expressed any gentle affection of the soul. She made the most natural, the most touching applications of them : Nelson arrived ; she flew to him, and repeated her lesson to him with a joy, and simplicity, which yet he found only amusing. Juliet alone saw the danger, and wanted to prevent it.

She began, by making Coraly understand that it was not polite to *thee* and *thou* it, and that she should say *you* : at least unless it were a brother and a sister. Coraly made her explain what politeness was, and asked what it was good for, if brother and sister had no need of it ? They told her, that in the world it supplied the place of good-humour. She con-

cluded, that it was useless to those who wished well to each other. They added, that it displayed a desire of obliging and of pleasing. She replied, that this desire displayed itself without politeness : then giving for an example Juliet's little dog, which never quitted her, and caressed her perpetually, she asked if he was polite. Juliet entrenched herself behind the punctilios of decorum which approved not, said she, the too free and joyous air of Coraly towards Nelson ; and the latter, who had the idea of jealousy, because nature gives us the sensation of it, imagined within herself that the sister was jealous of the kindnesses which her brother did her. " No," said she to her, " I will afflict you no longer. I love you, I submit, and I will say *you* to Nelson."

He was surprised at this change in Coraly's language, and complained of it to Juliet.— " The *you*," said he, " displeases me in her mouth : it agrees not with her simplicity." " It displeases me too," replied the Indian : " it has something rebuffing and severe ; whereas the *thou* is so soft ! so intimate ! so attracting !" — " Do you hear, sister ? She begins to understand the language." — " Ha ! it is not that which makes me uneasy : with a soul like her's, we express ourselves but too well." " Explain to me," said Coraly

Coraly to Nelson, "whence can arise the ridiculous custom of saying *you*, in speaking to a single person."—"It arises, child, from the pride and weakness of man: he perceives that he is insignificant, being but one: he endeavours to double himself to multiply himself in idea."—"Yes, I comprehend that, folly; but thou, Nelson, thou art not vain enough..." "Again!" interrupted Juliet with a severe tone.—"Hey! what, sister, are you going to chide her!" "Come, Coraly, come to me."—"I forbid her."—"How cruel you are? Is she in danger with me? Do you suspect me of laying snares for her? Ah! leave her that pure nature; leave her the amiable candour of her country and age. Wherefore tarnish in her that flower of innocence, more precious than virtue itself, and which our factitious manners have so much difficulty to supply? It seems to me that nature is afflicted when the idea of evil penetrates into the soul. Alas! it is a venomous plant which grows wild, but too readily, without our giving ourselves the trouble of sowing it."—"What you say, is very fine to be sure; but since evil exists, we must avoid it; and in order to avoid it, we must know it."—"Ah! my poor little Coraly," said Nelson, "into what a world art thou trans-

“planted! What manners are those, in which we are obliged to lose one half of our innocence, in order to save the other!

In proportion as the moral ideas increased in the young Indian's mind, she lost her gaiety, and natural ingenuousness. Every new institution seemed to her a new fetter. “Another duty!” said she. “Another prohibition! My soul is enveloped as with a net, they are going soon to render it immoveable.” That they made a crime of what was hurtful, Coraly comprehended without difficulty; but she could not imagine any harm in what did no harm to any body. “What greater happiness in living together,” said she, “than to see one another with pleasure? and why conceal from ourselves so sweet an impression? Is not pleasure a blessing? Why then hide it from the person who occasions it? They pretend to feel it with those whom they do not love, and to feel none with those whom they do! Some enemy of truth devised these manners.”

Reflexions of this sort plunged her into melancholy; and when Juliet reproached her with it, “you know the cause of it,” said she: “every thing that is contrary to nature must make her sorrowful, and in your manners every thing is contrary to nature.” Coraly, in her little impatiences had some-
2 thing

“ thing so soft and touching, that lady Albury accused herself of afflicting her by too much rigour. Her manner of consoling her, and of restoring to her her good humour, was by employing her in little services, and by commanding her as her child. The pleasure of thinking that she was useful, flattered her sensibly : she foresaw the instant, in order to seise it ; but the same attentions that she paid to Juliet, she wanted to pay to Nelson, and they distressed her by moderating her zeal. “ The good offices of servitude,” said she, “ are low and vile, because they are not “ voluntary ; but from the moment that they “ are free, there is no longer shame, and “ friendship enobles them. Fear not, my “ good friend, that I shall suffer myself to be “ abased. Though very young, before I “ quitted India, I knew the dignity of the “ tribe in which I was born ; and when your “ fine ladies and young lords come to examine “ me with such familiar curiosity, their disdain only elevates my soul, and I perceive “ that I am well worth them all. But with “ you and Nelson, who love me as your “ daughter, what can there be humiliating “ to me ?”

Nelson himself seemed sometimes confused at the trouble she took. “ You are very “ vain then,” said she to him, “ since you

“ blush at having need of me ! I am not so
 “ proud as you : serve me ; I shall be flattered
 “ with it.”

All these strokes of an ingenuous and sensible soul, made lady Albury uneasy. “ I
 “ tremble,” said she to Nelson, when they
 were alone, “ I tremble, lest she love you,
 “ and lest that love occasion her unhappi-
 “ ness.” He took this hint for an injury to
 innocence. See there now,” said he, “ how
 “ the abuse of words alters and displaces
 “ ideas. Coraly loves me, I know it ; but
 “ she loves me as you do. Is there any thing
 “ more natural than to attach one’s-self to the
 “ person who does us good ? Is it a fault in
 “ this girl, if the tender and lively expression
 “ of a sentiment so just, and so laudable, is
 “ profaned in our manners ? Whatever cri-
 “ minality we affix to it, has it ever come into
 “ her thought ?” — “ No, brother, you do
 “ not understand me. Nothing more inno-
 “ cent than her love for you ; but . . .” —
 “ But, sister, why suppose, why want it to
 “ be love ? It is true and pure friendship for
 “ me, which she has for you likewise.” —
 “ You persuade yourself, Nelson, that it is
 “ the same sentiment ; will you make trial
 “ of it ? Let us have the appearance of sepa-
 “ rating, and of reducing her to the choice
 “ of quitting the one or the other.” — “ See
 “ there

“there now : snares ! whiles ! Why impose
“them on her ? Why teach her to dissem-
“ble ? Alas ! does her soul practise dis-
“guise ?”—“ Yes, I begin to constrain her :
“she is grown afraid of me, ever since she
“has loved you.”—“ And why have you
“inspired her with that fear ? You would
“have us be ingenuous, and you make it
“dangerous to be so : you recommend
“truth, and, if it escape, you make it a re-
“proach. Ah ! Nature is not to blame :
“she would be frank if she had liberty : it is
“the art which is employed to constrain her
“that gives her a bias to falsity.”—“ These
“are very grave reflexions for what is in fact
“a mere jest ! For, after all, what does the
“whole amount to ? To make Coraly uneasy
“for a moment, in order to see to which
“side her heart will incline : that is all.”—
“That is all : but that is a falsity ; and,
“which is worse, an afflicting one.”—“ Let
“us think no more of it : it answers no end
“to examine what we would not see.”—“ I,
“sister ! I only want information, to know
“how to behave. The manner alone has
“displeased me ; but no matter : what do you
“require of me ?”—“ Silence, and a serious
“air. Coraly comes ; now you shall hear.”

“What is the matter now,” said Coraly,
on coming up to them ? “Nelson in one
“corner !

“corner ! Juliet in the other ! Are you displeased ?” “ We have just taken,” said Juliet to her, “ a resolution which afflicts us ; but there was a necessity of coming to it. We are no longer to live together ; each of us is to have a house of their own ; and we are agreed to leave you the choice.”

At these words, Coraly viewed Juliet with eyes immoveable, with sorrow and astonishment. “ It is I,” said she, “ that am the cause of your wanting to quit Nelson. You are displeased that he loves me ; you are jealous of the pity which a young orphan inspires him with. Alas ! what will you not envy, if you envy pity ; if you envy her who loves you, and who would give her life for you, the only valuable thing which is left her ? You are unjust, my lady, yes, you are unjust. Your brother, in loving me, loves not you less, and if it were possible he would love you more, for my sentiments would pass into his soul, and I have nothing to inspire into him towards you but complaisance and love.”

Juliet would fain have persuaded her, that she and Nelson parted good friends. “ It is impossible,” said she. “ You made it your delight to live together. And since
“ when

“when is it become necessary that you should have two houses? People who love one another are never put to straits; distance pleases only those who hate each other.” “You, O heaven! You to hate,” resumed she! “And who will love, if two hearts, so good, so virtuous, do not. It is I, wretch as I am, that have brought trouble into the house of peace. I will banish myself from it: yes, I beseech you, send me back into my own country. I shall there find souls sensible to my misfortune and to my tears, who will not make it a crime in me to inspire a little pity.”

“You forget,” said Juliet to her, “that you are our charge.” “I am free,” replied the young Indian fiercely: “I may dispose of myself. What should I do here? With whom should I live? With what eyes would one of you regard me, after having deprived you of the other? Should I supply the place of a sister to Nelson? Should I console you for the loss of a brother? To occasion the unhappiness of what alone I love; No, you shall not part: my arms shall be a chain to you.” Then running towards Nelson, and seizing him by the hand——“Come,” said she to him, “swear to your sister, that you love nothing in the world so well as her.” Nelson, touched

touched to the bottom of his soul, suffered himself to be led to his sister's feet; and Coraly throwing herself on Juliet's neck, "You," continued she, "if you are my mother, pardon him for having loved your child: his heart was enough for us both, and if you are any loser there, mine shall indemnify you for it." "Ah! dangerous girl," said Juliet, "what sorrows will you soon occasion us!" "Ah, sister," cried Nelson, who felt himself pressed by Coraly against Juliet's bosom, "have you the heart to afflict this poor girl!"

Coraly, enchanted at her triumph, kissed Juliet tenderly, at the very instant when Nelson put his face to his sister's. He felt his cheek touch the glowing cheek of Coraly, still wet with tears. He was surprised at the confusion and extasy which this accident occasioned him. "Happily that," said he, "it is only a simple emotion of the senses: it goes not to the soul. I am myself, and I am sure of myself." He dissembled, however, from his sister, what he would fain have concealed from himself. He tenderly consoled Coraly, in confessing to her that all they had just said to her, to make her uneasy, was nothing more than a jest. "But what is no jest," added he, "is the counsel which I give you of distrusting, [my dear Coraly, your

“ your own heart, which is too innocent, and
“ too sensible. Nothing more charming than
“ this affecting and tender disposition, but the
“ best things very often become dangerous by
“ their excess.”

“ Will you not quiet my uneasinesses ?”
said Coraly to Juliet, as soon as Nelson was
retired. “ Though you tell me so, it is not
“ natural to make sport of my sorrow.
“ There is something serious in this pastime.
“ I see you deeply moved ; Nelson himself
“ was seized with I know not what terroure ;
“ I felt his hand tremble in mine ; my eyes
“ met his, and I saw there something so ten-
“ der, and so sorrowful at the same time.
“ He dreads my sensibility. He seems to be
“ afraid that I should deliver myself up to it.
“ My good friend, would it be any harm to
“ love ?”—“ Yes, child, since we must tell
“ you so, it is a misfortune both for you and
“ for him. A woman, you may have seen it
“ in the Indies as well as among us, a woman
“ is destined for the society of one man alone ;
“ and by that union solemnised and sacred,
“ the pleasure of loving becomes a duty to
“ her.” “ I know it,” said Coraly, ingenu-
ously : “ that is what they call marriage.”—
“ Yes, Coraly, and that friendship is laudable
“ between two married persons ; but till then
“ it is forbidden.”—“ That is not reason-
“ able,”

“ble,” said the young Indian : “ for before
 “ uniting one to the other, we must know
 “ whether we love each other ; and it is but
 “ in proportion to our love before-hand, that
 “ we are sure of loving afterwards. For ex-
 “ ample, if Nelson loved me as I love him,
 “ it would be clear that each of us had met
 “ their counterpart.”—“ And do you not see
 “ in how many respects, and by how many
 “ compacts, we are slaves ; and that you are
 “ not destined for Nelson ?” “ I understand
 “ you,” said Coraly, looking down ; “ I am
 “ poor, and Nelson is rich ; but my ill fortune
 “ at least does not forbid me to honour and
 “ cherish beneficent virtue. If a tree had
 “ sentiment, it would please itself in seeing
 “ the person who cultivates it repose himself
 “ under its shade, breathe the perfume of its
 “ flowers, and taste the sweetness of its fruits :
 “ I am that tree, cultivated by you two, and
 “ nature has given me a soul.”

Juliet smiled at the comparison ; but she soon gave her to understand, that nothing would be less decent, than what to her seemed so just. Coraly heard her, and blushed ; from that time, to her gaiety, to her natural ingenuousness, succeeded an air the most reserved, and a conversation the most timid. What hurt her most in our manners, though she might have seen examples of it in India, was,
 the

the excessive inequality of riches: but she had not yet been humiliated by it: she was so now for the first time.

“Madam,” said she, the next day, to Juliet, “my life is spent in instructing myself in things which are rather superfluous. An industry which furnishes bread, would be much more useful to me. It is a resource, which, I beseech you, to be pleased to procure me.” “You will never be reduced to that,” said Lady Albury, “and, not to mention us, it is not for nothing that Blandford has assumed towards you the quality of father.” “Favours,” replied Coraly, “bind us much oftener than we would choose. It is not disgraceful to receive them; but I clearly perceive that it is still more reputable to do without them.” It was in vain that Juliet complained of this excess of delicacy: Coraly would not hear of amusements, or of useless studies. Amidst the labours which suit feeble hands, she chose those which required the most address and understanding, and, on applying herself to them, her only anxiety was to know whether they afforded a subsistence. “You will leave me then?” said Juliet. “I would put myself,” replied Coraly, “above all wants, except that of loving you. I would have it in my power to rid you of me, if I am any obstacle to
“your

“ your happiness ; but if I can contribute to
 “ it, entertain no fear of my removing myself.
 “ I am useless, and yet I am dear to you ; that
 “ disinterestedness is an example which I think
 “ myself worthy of imitating.”

Nelson knew not what to think of Coraly's application to a labour merely mechanical, and of the disgust which had seized her, for matters of pure entertainment. He saw with the same surprize, the modest simplicity which she had assumed in her dress ; he asked her the reason. “ I am trying what it is to be poor,” replied she, with a smile, and casting her eyes downwards, bedewed them with her tears. These words, and involuntary tears, touched him to the soul. “ O heaven !” said he, “ Can my sister have made her afraid of seeing herself poor and desolate !” As soon as he was alone with Juliet, he pressed her to clear up the matter to him.

“ Alas !” said he, after having heard her, “ what cruel pains you take to poison her life and mine ! Though you were less certain of her innocence, are you not persuaded of my honour ?”—“ Ah, Nelson ! It is not the crime, it is the misfortune which terrifies me. You see with what dangerous security she delivers herself up to the pleasure of seeing you ; how she attaches herself insensibly to you ; how nature leads
 “ her,

“ her, without her knowledge, into the snare.
“ Ah, brother! at our age and hers, the name
“ of friendship is but a veil. And why can I
“ not leave you both under the illusion! No,
“ Nelson, your duty is dearer to me than
“ your ease. Coraly is destined for your
“ friend; he himself has confided her to you;
“ and, without intending it, you take her
“ from him.”—“ I, sister! What is it you
“ dare to warn me of?”—“ Of what you
“ ought to shun. I would have her, at the
“ same time that she loves you, consent to give
“ herself to Blandford: I would have him flatter
“ himself with being loved by her, and be
“ happy with her; but will she be happy with
“ him? Were you sensible only of pity, of
“ which she is so worthy, what sorrow would
“ you not feel at having troubled, perhaps for
“ ever, the repose of this unfortunate young
“ creature? But it would be a prodigy to see
“ her consume with love, and you do nothing
“ more than pity her. You will love her. . .
“ Will, do I say? Ah, Nelson, Heaven grant
“ that you do not already!”—“ Yes, sister,
“ it is time to take whatever resolution you
“ please. I only beg of you to spare the sen-
“ sibility of that innocent soul, and not to
“ afflict her too much.”—“ Your absence will
“ afflict her without doubt; yet that alone
“ can cure her. This is the time of the year,
“ for

“ for the country ; I was to follow you there,
 “ and to bring Coraly ; [do you go alone :
 “ we will remain at London. Write, how-
 “ ever, to Blandford, that we have occasion for
 “ his return.”

From the moment the Indian saw that Nelson left her at London with Juliet, she thought herself cast into a desert, and abandoned by all nature. But as she had learned to be ashamed, and of course to dissemble, she pretended, as an excuse for her sorrow, the blame she took to herself of having separated them from each other. “ You was to have followed him,” said she to Lady Albury ; “ it is I that keep you here. Ah, wretch that I am ! leave me alone, abandon me.” And in saying these words, she wept bitterly. The more Juliet tried to divert her, the more she increased her sorrows. All the objects which surrounded her, served only just to touch her senses ; one idea alone possessed her soul. There was a necessity for a kind of violence to draw her from it, but the instant they left her to herself, it seemed as if one saw her thought fly back again to the object which she had been made to quit. If the name of Nelson was pronounced before her, a deep blush overspread her visage, her bosom heaved, her lips trembled, her whole body was seized with a sensible shivering. Juliet surprized her
 in

in a walk, tracing out on the sand, from place to place, the letters of that dear name. Nelson's picture decorated Juliet's apartment; Coraly's eyes never failed to fix themselves upon it, as soon as they were free: it was in vain she wanted to turn them aside; they soon returned there again, as it were of themselves, and by one of those emotions, in which the soul is accomplice, and not confidante. The gloominess into which she was plunged, dispersed at this sight, her work fell out of her hands, and the utmost tenderness of sorrow and love animated her beauty.

Lady Albury thought it her duty to remove this feeble image. This was to Coraly the most distressful misfortune. Her despair now broke all bounds. "Cruel friend," said she to Juliet, "you delight in afflicting me. You would have all my life be only sorrow and bitterness. If any thing softens my troubles, you cruelly take it from me. Not content to banish from me the man I love; his very shadow has too many charms for me, you envy me the pleasure, the feeble pleasure of seeing it."—"Ah, unhappy girl! what would you?"—"Love, adore him, live for him, while he shall live for another. I hope nothing, I ask nothing, my hands are sufficient to enable me to live, my heart is sufficient to enable me to

"love.

“love. I am troublesome to you, perhaps
“odious; remove me from you, and leave
“me only that image wherein his soul
“breathes, or wherein I think at least I see
“it breathe, I will see it, I will speak to it,
“I will persuade myself that it sees my tears
“flow, that it hears my sighs, and that it is
“touched by them.” — “And wherefore,
“my dear Coraly, nourish this cruel flame,
“which devours you? I afflict you, but it is
“for your good, and Nelson’s peace. Would
“you render him unhappy? He will be so,
“if he knows that you love him; and still
“more so if he loves you, You are not in
“a condition to hear my reasons; but this
“inclination, which you think so sweet,
“would be the poison of his life. Have pity,
“my dear child, of your friend, and my brother:
“spare him the remorse, the complaints,
“which would bring him to his grave.”
Coraly trembled at this discourse. She pressed
Lady Albury to tell her how Nelson’s love
for her could be so fatal to him. “To explain
“myself farther,” said Juliet, “would
“be to render odious to you, what you ought
“for ever to cherish. But the most sacred of
“all duties forbids him the hope of being
“yours.”

How is it possible to express the distress into
which Coraly’s soul was plunged? “What
“manners,

"manners, what a country," said she, "wherein one cannot dispose of one-self; wherein the first of all blessings, mutual love, is a terrible evil! I must tremble then at seeing Nelson again! I must tremble at pleasing him! At pleasing him! alas! I would give my life to be one moment, in his eyes, as amiable as he is in mine. Let me banish myself from this fatal shore, where it is made a misfortune to be loved."

Coraly heard, every day, of vessels sailing for her country. She resolved to embark, without taking leave of Juliet. Only one evening, on going to bed, Juliet perceived that in kissing her hand, her lips pressed her more tenderly than usual, and that some profound sighs escaped her. "She leaves me more moved than ever before," said Juliet; alarmed. "Her eyes are fixed on mine, with the most lively expression of tenderness and sorrow. What passes in her soul?" This uneasiness disturbed her the whole night, and the next morning she sent to know if Coraly was not yet up. They told her that she was gone out, alone, and in a very plain dress, and that she had taken the way to the water-side. Lady Albury gets up in distress, and orders them to go in pursuit of the Indian.— They find her on board a vessel begging her passage, environed by sailors, whom her beauty,

her graces, her youth, the sound of her voice, and, above all, the native simplicity of her request, ravished with surprise and admiration. She had nothing with her, but bare necessities. — Every thing they had given her which was valuable, she had left behind, excepting a little heart of chrystal, which she had received from Nelson.

At the name of Lady Albury, she submitted without resistance, and suffered herself to be reconveyed home. She appeared before her a little confused at her elopement, but to her reproaches, she answered, that she was unhappy and free. “What, my dear Coraly! do you “see nothing here but unhappiness?” “If I “saw here only my own,” said she, “I “should never leave you. It is Nelson’s unhappiness that frights me, and it is for his “peace that I would fly.”

Juliet knew not what to reply: she durst not talk to her of the rights which Blandford had acquired over her: this would have been to make her hate him, as the cause of her unhappiness. She chose rather to lessen her fears. “I could not conceal from you,” said she to her, “all the danger of a fruitless love; but “the evil is not without remedy. Six months “of absence, reason, friendship, how can we “tell? Another object, perhaps . . .” The Indian interrupted her. “Say death: there

“is

“is my only remedy. What! Will reason
“cure me of loving the most accomplished,
“the most worthy of men! Will six months
“of absence give me a soul that loves him
“not! Does time change nature? Friendship
“will pity me: but will it cure me? An-
“other object! You do not think so.
“You do not do me that injustice. There are
“not two Nelsons in the world; but though
“there were a thousand, I have but one
“heart: that is given away. It is, you say,
“a fatal gift: that I do not comprehend;
“but if it be so, suffer me to banish myself
“from Nelson, to hide from him my person
“and my tears. He is not insensible, he
“would be moved at it; and if it be a misfor-
“tune to him to love me, pity might lead
“him to it. Alas! who can, with indif-
“ference, see himself cherished as a father,
“revered as a god! Who can see himself
“loved as I love him, and not love in his
“turn?” “You will not expose him to that
“danger,” replied Juliet; “you will con-
“ceal your weakness from him, and you will
“triumph over it. No, Coraly, it is not the
“strength that is wanting to you, but the
“courage of virtue.” — “Alas! I have
“courage against misfortune; but is there
“any against love? And what virtue would
“you have me oppose to him? They all act

“in concert with him. No, my Lady, you
 “talk to no purpose : you throw clouds over
 “my understanding ; you shed not the least
 “light on it. Let me see and hear Nelson :
 “he shall decide upon my life.”

Lady Albury, in the most cruel perplexity, seeing the unhappy Coraly withering and pining in tears, and begging to be suffered to depart ; resolved to write to Nelson, that he might come and persuade the poor girl from her design of returning to India, and preserve her from that disgust of life which daily consumed her. But Nelson himself was not less to be pitied. Scarce had he quitted Coraly, but he perceived the danger of seeing her, by the repugnance which he had to leave her.—All that had appeared only play to him with her, became serious, on being deprived of her. In the silence of solitude, he had interrogated his soul : he had found there friendship languishing, zeal for the public good weakened, nay almost extinguished, and love alone ruling there, with that sweet and terrible sway which he exercises over good hearts. He perceived, with horror, that his very reason had suffered itself to be seduced. The rights of Blandford were no longer so sacred ; and the involuntary crime of depriving him of Coraly’s heart, was at least very excusable ; after all, the Indian was free, and Blandford himself would not have

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wished

wished to impose it on her as a duty to be his.
“ Ah, wretch !” cried Nelson, terrified at these ideas ; “ whither does a blind passion
“ lead me astray ! The poison of vice gains
“ upon me : my heart is already corrupted.
“ Is it for me to examine whether the charge,
“ which is committed to me, belong to the
“ person who commits it ? And am I made
“ the judge, to whom it belongs, when I have
“ promised to keep it ? The Indian is free ;
“ but am I so ? Should I doubt the rights of
“ Blandford, if it were not in order to usurp
“ them ? My crime was, at first, involuntary ;
“ but it is no longer so, the moment I consent
“ to it : I ! justify perjury ! I ! think a faith-
“ less friend excusable ! Who would have
“ told thee, Nelson, who would have told
“ thee, that on embracing the virtuous Bland-
“ ford, thou shouldest call in doubt, whether
“ it were permitted thee to ravish from him
“ the woman who is to be his wife, and whom
“ he delivered up to thy trust ? To what a
“ degree does love debase a man ! And what
“ a strange revolution its intoxication makes
“ in a heart ! Ah ! let him rend mine, if he
“ will ; he shall not make it either perfidious
“ or base ; and if my reason abandon me, my
“ conscience at least shall not betray me. Its
“ light is incorruptible : the cloud of passions
“ cannot obscure it : there is my guide ; and
I 3 “ friendship,

“friendship, honour, and fidelity, have still
“some support.”

In the mean time Coraly's image pursued him perpetually. If he had only seen her with all her charms, arrayed in simple beauty, bearing in her countenance the serenity of innocence, the smile of candour on her lips, the fire of desire in her eyes, and in all the graces of her person the attracting air of voluptuousness, he would have found in his principles, in the severity of his manners, sufficient force to withstand seduction ; but he thought he saw that amiable girl as sensible as himself, more feeble, with no other defence than a prudence which was not her own, innocently abandoning herself to an inclination which would be her unhappiness ; and the pity which she inspired him with, served as fuel to his love. Nelson blamed himself for loving Coraly, but forgave himself for pitying her. Sensible of the evils which he was on the point of being the cause of, he could not paint to himself her tears, without thinking of the fine eyes which were to shed them, and the heaving bosom which they would bedew : thus the resolution of forgetting her, rendered her still dearer to him. He attached himself to her by renouncing her : but in proportion as he perceived himself weaker, he became more courageous. “Let me give over,” said he,
“the

“ the thoughts of a cure: I exhaust myself
“ in fruitless efforts. It is a fit which I must
“ suffer to go off. I burn, I languish, I die ;
“ but all that is mere suffering, and I am an-
“ swerable to nobody but myself for what
“ passes within. Provided nothing escape me
“ from without, that discovers my passion,
“ my friend has no reason to complain. It
“ is only a misfortune to be weak ; and I have
“ the courage to be unhappy.”

It was in this resolution of dying, rather than betraying his friendship, that he received the letter from his sister. He read it with an emotion, an ecstasy that was inexpressible. “ O, sweet and tender victim,” said he, “ thou groanest, thou wouldest sacrifice thyself to my repose, and to my duty ! Pardon ! Heaven is my witness, that I feel, more strongly than thyself, all the pangs which I occasion thee. Oh, may my friend ! thy husband, soon arrive, and wipe away thy precious tears ! He will love thee as I love thee ; he will make his own happiness thine. However, I must see her, in order to detain and console her. Why should I see her ! To what do I expose myself ! Her touching graces, her sorrow, her love, her tears which I occasion to flow, and which it would be so sweet to dry up, those sighs which a heart simple and artless suffers to escape, that lan-

“ guage of nature, in which a soul the most
 “ sensible paints itself with so much candour;
 “ what trials to support? What will become
 “ of me? And what can I say to her? No
 “ matter: I must see her, and talk to her, as
 “ a friend and a father. After seeing her, I
 “ only shall be the more uneasy, the more
 “ unhappy for it; but it is not my own peace
 “ that is in question; it is hers; and above
 “ all, the happiness of a friend depends on it,
 “ a friend for whom she must live. I am cer-
 “ tain of subduing myself; and how painful
 “ soever the contest may be, it would be a
 “ weakness and shame to avoid it.”

At Nelson's arrival, Coraly, trembling and
 confused, scarce dared present herself to him.
 She had wished his return with ardour, and,
 at seeing him, a mortal chillness glided through
 her veins. She appeared, as it were, before a
 judge who was preparing, with one single
 word, to decide her fate.

What were Nelson's feelings, on seeing the
 roses of youth faded on her beautiful cheeks,
 and the fire of her eyes almost extinguished!
 “ Come,” said Juliet to her brother, “ ap-
 “ pease the mind of this poor girl, and cure
 “ her of her melancholy. She is eaten up
 “ with the vapours with me; she wants to
 “ return to India.”

Nelson,

Nelson, speaking to her in a friendly manner, wanted to engage her, by gentle reproaches, to explain herself before his sister; but Coraly kept silence; and Juliet, perceiving that she was a restraint upon her, went away.

“What is the matter with you, Coraly?”
“What have we done to you?” said Nelson.
“What sorrow presses you?” — “Do not
“you know it? Must you not have seen that
“my joy and my sorrow can no longer have
“more than one cause? Cruel friend, I live
“only through you; and you fly me: you
“would have me die! . . . But you would
“not have it so; they make you do it: they
“do more, they require of me to renounce
“you, and to forget you. They fright me,
“they damp my very soul, and they oblige
“you to make me distracted. I ask of you
“but one favour,” continued she, throwing
herself at his knees, “it is to tell me whom
“I offend in loving you, what duty I betray,
“and what evil I occasion. Are there here
“laws so cruel, are there tyrants so rigorous,
“as to forbid me the most worthy use of my
“heart and my reason? Must we love no-
“thing in the world? or, if I may love, can
“I make a better choice?”

“My dear Coraly,” replied Nelson,
“nothing is truer, nothing is more tender

“than the friendship which attaches me to
 “you. It would be impossible, it would be
 “even unjust that you should not be sensible
 “of it.” — “Ah! I revive: this is talking
 “reason.” — “But though it would be ex-
 “tremely agreeable to me to be what you
 “hold dearest in the world, it is what I
 “cannot pretend, neither ought I even to
 “consent to it.” — “Alas! now I don’t
 “understand you.” — “When my friend
 “confided you to my care, he was dear to
 “you?” — “He is so still.” — “You would
 “have thought yourself happy to be his?”
 — “I believe it.” — “You loved nothing so
 “much as him in the world?” — “I did not
 “know you.” — “Blandford, your deliverer,
 “the depositary of your innocence, in loving
 “you has a right to be loved.” — “His
 “favours are always present to me; I cherish
 “him as a second father:” — “Very well,
 “know that he has resolved to unite you to
 “him, by a tie still more sweet and sacred
 “than that of his favours. He has confided
 “to me the half of himself, and at his return
 “he aspires only to the happiness of being
 “your husband.” “Ah!” said Coraly,
 comforted, “this then is the obstacle which
 “separates us? Be easy, it is removed.” —
 “How?” — “Never, never, I swear to you,
 “will Coraly be the wife of Blandford.” —
 “It

“ It must be so.” — “ Impossible ; Blandford himself will confess it.” — “ What ! He who received you from the hand of a dying father, and who himself has acted as a father to you ! ” — “ Under that sacred title I revere Blandford ; but let him not require more.” — “ You have then resolved his unhappiness ? ” — “ I have resolved to deceive nobody, If I were given to Blandford, and Nelson demanded my life of me, I would lay down my life for Nelson ; I should be perjured to Blandford.” — “ What say you ? ” — “ What I will dare to tell Blandford himself. And why should I dissemble it ? Does love depend on myself ? ” — “ Ah, how culpable you make me ! ” — “ You ! In what ? In being amiable in my eyes ? Ay, heaven disposes of us. Heaven has given to Nelson those graces, those virtues which charm me ; heaven has given to me this soul, which it has made expressly for Nelson. If they knew how full it is of him, how impossible that it should love any thing but you, any thing like you ! . . . Let them never talk to me of living, if it be not for you that I live.” — “ And this is what distresses me. With what reproaches has not my friend a right to overwhelm me ? ” — “ He ! of what can he complain ? What has he lost ? What have you taken from
I 6 “ him ?

" him ? I love Blandford as a tender father ;
 " I love Nelson as myself, and more than
 " myself: these sentiments are not incom-
 " patible. If Blandford delivered me into
 " your hands as a deposit which was his own,
 " it is not you, it is he that is unjust."—
 " Alas ! it is me, who obliges you to reclaim
 " from him that treasure of which I rob
 " him: it would be his if it were not
 " mine; and the keeper becomes the pur-
 " loiner."—" No, my friend, be equitable,
 " I was my own, I am yours. I alone could
 " give myself away, and have given myself
 " to you. By attributing to friendship rights
 " which it has not, it is you that usurp them
 " in its behalf, and you render yourself an
 " accomplice of the violence which they do
 " me." — " He, my friend ! do you vio-
 " lence ?"—" What signifies it to me whe-
 " ther he does it himself, or that you do it for
 " him ? Am I treated the less like a slave ?
 " One single interest occupies and touches
 " you; but if another than your friend
 " wanted to retain me captive, far from sub-
 " scribing to it, would not you make it your
 " glory to set me free ? It is then only for
 " the sake of friendship that you betray
 " nature ! What do I say ? Nature ! and
 " Love, Nelson, Love, has not that also its
 " rights ? Is there not some law among you
 " in

“in favour of sensible souls? Is it just and
“generous to overwhelm, to drive to despair
“a fond female, and to tear without pity a
“heart whose only crime is loving you?”

Sobs interrupted her voice; and Nelson, who saw her choaked with them, had not even time to call his sister. He hastens to untie the ribbands which bound her bosom: and then all the charms of youth in its flower were unveiled to the eyes of this passionate lover. The terror with which he was seized, rendered him at first insensible of them; but when the Indian resuming her spirits, and perceiving herself pressed in his arms, thrilled with love and transport, and when on opening her fine languishing eyes, she sought the eyes of Nelson; “heavenly powers,” said he, “support me! all my virtue abandons me. “Live, my dear Coraly.”—“Would you that “I should live, Nelson! would you then “that I love you?”—“No, I should be “perjured to friendship, I should be unworthy “to see the light; unworthy of seeing my “friend again. Alas! he foretold me this, “and I vouchsafed not to believe him. I “have presumed too much on my own heart. “Have pity of it, Coraly, of that heart “which you rend to pieces. Suffer me to fly “you and to subdue myself.” “Ah! you “would have my death,” said she to him, falling

falling into a fit at his feet. Nelson, who thinks he sees what he loves expiring, rushes to embrace her, and restraining himself suddenly at the sight of Juliet, "my sister," said he, "assist her: it is for me to die." On saying these words he withdraws.

"Where is he," demanded Coraly, on opening her eyes? "What have I done to him? Why fly me? And you, Juliet, more cruel still, why recall me to life?" Her sorrow redoubled, when she learned that Nelson was just gone; but reflexion gave her a little hope and courage. The concern and tenderness which Nelson had not been able to conceal, the terror with which she had seen him seized, the tender words which had escaped him, and the violence which it was to him to subdue himself and withdraw, all persuaded her that she was beloved. If it "be true," said she, "I am happy. Blandford will return, I will confess the whole to him; he is too just and too generous to want to tyrannize over me." But this illusion was soon dissipated.

Nelson received in the country a letter from his friend, announcing his return. "I hope," said he, at the end of his letter, "to see myself, in three days, united to all that I love. Pardon, my friend, if I associate to thee in my heart the amiable
" and

“and tender Coraly. My soul was a long
“time solely devoted to thee, now she partakes
“of it. I have confided to thee the sweetest
“of my wishes, and I have seen friendship
“applaud love. I form my happiness, both
“of one and the other; I make it my felicity
“to think that by thy cares, and those of
“thy sister, I shall see my dear pupil again,
“her mind ornamented with new acquirements,
“her soul enriched with new virtues,
“more amiable if possible and more disposed
“to love. It will be the purest bliss to me to
“possess her as a benefit conferred by you.”

“Read this letter,” writ Nelson to his sister, “and make Coraly read it. What a lesson for me ! What a reproach to her !”

“It is over,” said Coraly after having read, “I shall never be Nelson’s; but let him not ask me to be another’s. The liberty of loving is a good which I am not able to renounce.” This resolution supported her; and Nelson in his solitude was much more unhappy than she.

“By what fatality,” said she, “is it, that what forms the charm of nature and the delight of all hearts, the happiness of being loved, forms my torment? What say I? Of being loved? That is nothing; but to be loved of what I love? To touch on happiness! To have only to deliver
2 “myself

“myself up to it! . . . Ah! all that I am
“able to do is to fly: inviolable and sacred
“friendship asks no more. In what a condi-
“tion have I seen this poor girl! In what a
“condition did I abandon her! She may well
“say, that she is the slave of my virtues. I sa-
“crifice her as a victim, and I am generous
“at her expence. There are then virtues
“which wound nature; and to be honest,
“one is sometimes obliged to be unjust
“and cruel! O, my friend! mayest thou
“gather the fruit of the efforts which it costs
“me, enjoy the good which I resign to thee,
“and live happy from my misfortune. Yes,
“I wish that she may love thee; I wish it,
“heaven is my witness: and the most sen-
“sible of all my pains is that of doubting the
“success of my wishes.”

It was impossible for nature to support her-
self in a state so violent. Nelson, after long
struggles, sought repose; alas! there was no
more repose for him. His constancy was at
last exhausted, and his discouraged soul fell
into a mortal languor. The weakness of his
reason, the inefficacy of his virtue, the image
of a painful and sorrowful life, the void and
the state of annihilation, into which his soul
would fall, if it ceased to love Coraly, the
evils without intermission which he was to
suffer if he continued to love her, and, above
all,

all, the terrifying idea of seeing, of envying, of hating, perhaps, a rival in his faithful friend, all rendered his life a torment to him, all urged him to shorten the course of it.—Motives more strong restrained him. It was not a part of Nelson's principles that a man, a citizen, might dispose of himself. He made it a law to himself to live, consoled in his misery if he could still be useful to the world, but consumed with heaviness and sorrow, and become as it were insensible to every thing.

The time appointed for Blandford's return approached. It was necessary that every thing should be so disposed as to conceal from him the mischief which his absence had occasioned: and who should determine Coraly to conceal it, but Nelson? He returned therefore to London: but languishing, dejected, to such a degree as not to be known. The sight of him overwhelmed Juliet with grief, and what impression did it not make on the soul of Coraly! Nelson took upon him to re-encourage them; but that very effort only served to complete his own dejection. The slow fever which consumed him redoubled; he was forced to give way to it; and this furnished occasion for a new contest between his sister and the young Indian. The latter would not quit Nelson's pillow. She urgently

gently entreated them to accept of her care and attendance. They kept her out of the way from pity to herself, and for the sake of sparing him ; but she tasted not the repose which they meant to procure her. Every moment of the night they found her wandering round the apartment of the diseased, or motionless on the threshold of his door, with tears in her eyes, her soul on her lips, her ear attentive to the slightest noises, every one of which congealed her with fear.

Nelson perceived that his sister suffered her to see him with regret. "Afflict her not," said he to her ; "it is to no purpose : severity "is no longer necessary. It is by gentleness "and patience that we must endeavour at our "cure." "Coraly, my good friend," said he to her one day when they were alone with Juliet, "you would readily give something "to restore my health, would not you ?—" "O heaven ! I would give my life."—"You can cure me at least. Our prejudices "are, perhaps, unjust, and our principles "inhuman : but the honest man is a slave to "them. I have been Blandford's friend from "my infancy. He depends on me as on "himself, and the chagrin of taking from "him a heart of which he has made me the "keeper, is every day digging my grave.— "You may see whether I exaggerate. I do
"not

"not conceal from you the source of the slow
"poison which consumes me. You alone
"can dry it up. I require it not: you shall
"be still free; but there is no other remedy
"for my disease. Blandford arrives. If he
"perceive your disinclination for him, if you
"refuse him that hand which but for me
"would have been granted him, be assured
"that I shall not survive his misfortune and
"my own remorse. Our embraces will be
"our adieus. Consult yourself, my dear
"child, and if you would that I live, recon-
"cile me with myself, justify me towards
"my friend."—"Ah! live, and dispose of
"me," said Coraly to him, forgetting her-
self; and these words, distressing to love, bore
joy to the bosom of friendship.

"But," resumed the Indian after a long
silence, "how can I give myself to him
"whom I do not love, with a heart full of
"him whom I do love?"—"My dear, in an
"honest soul, duty triumphs over every
"thing. By losing the hope of being mine,
"you will soon lose the thought. It will
"give you some pain without doubt, but
"my life depends on it, and you will have
"the consolation of having saved it."—
"That is every thing to me: I give myself
"up at that price. Sacrifice your victim:
"it will groan, but it will obey. But you,
"Nelson,

“ Nelson, you, who are truth itself, would
“ you have me disguise my inclinations, and
“ impose thus on your friend ! Will you
“ instruct me in the art of dissembling ?—
“ No, Coraly, dissimulation is useless. I
“ have not had the misfortune of extin-
“ guishing in you gratitude, esteem, and ten-
“ der friendship ; these sentiments are due
“ to your benefactor, and they are sufficient
“ for your husband : only display these to-
“ wards him. As to that inclination which
“ leans not towards him, you owe him the
“ sacrifice of it, but not the confession.—
“ That which would hurt, if it were known,
“ ought to remain for ever concealed ; and
“ dangerous truth has silence for its refuge.”

Juliet interrupted this scene, too painful
to both, by leading away Coraly, whom she
employed every endearment and commend-
ation to console. “ It is thus,” said the
young Indian, with a smile of sorrow, “ that
“ on the Ganges they flatter the grief of a
“ widow, who is going to devote herself to
“ the flames of her husband’s funeral pile.
“ They adorn her, they crown her with
“ flowers, they stupefy her with songs of
“ praise. Alas ! her sacrifice is soon finished :
“ mine will be cruel and lasting. My good
“ friend ; I am not eighteen years of age !
“ What tears have I yet to shed till the
“ moment

“ moment when my eyes shall shut themselves
“ for ever !” This melancholy idea painted
to Juliet a soul absorbed in sorrow. She em-
ployed herself no longer in consoling her, but
in grieving along with her. Complaisance,
persuasion, indulgent and feeling compassion,
all that friendship has most delicate, was put
in practice to no effect.

At last, they inform her that Blandford is
landed ; and Nelson, enfeebled and faint as
he is, goes to receive and embrace him at the
harbour. Blandford, on seeing him, could
not conceal his astonishment and his uneasi-
ness. “ Courage, man,” said Nelson : I
“ have been very ill : but my health is re-
“ turning. I see you again, and joy is a
“ balm which will soon revive me. I am not
“ the only one whose health has suffered by
“ your absence. Your pupil is a little
“ changed : the air of our climate may con-
“ tribute to it. As to the rest, she has made
“ a great progress : her understanding, her
“ talents have unfolded themselves, and if
“ the kind of languor into which she is fallen
“ vanishes, you will possess what is pretty
“ uncommon, a woman, in whom nature
“ has left nothing wanting.”

Blandford, therefore, was not surprised to
find Coraly weak and languishing ; but he
was much affected at it. “ It seems,” said
he,

he, "as if heaven wanted to moderate my joy, and to punish me for the impatience which my duty excited in me at a distance from you, I am now here again free and restored to love and friendship." The word *love* made Coraly tremble: Blandford perceived her concern. "My friend," said he to her, "ought to have prepared you for the confession which you have just heard." — "Yes, your goodness is well known to me: but can I approve the excess of it?" "That is a language which favours of the politeness of Europe: join with me to forget it. Frank and tender Coraly, I have seen the time when if I had said, shall hy-men unite us? you would have answered me without disguise. "With all my heart," or possibly, "I cannot consent to it;" use the same freedom now.—I love you, Coraly, but I love to make you happy: your misfortune would be mine." Nelson, trembling, looked at Coraly, and durst not guess her answer. "I hesitate," said she to Blandford, "through a fear like yours. — While I saw you only as a friend, a second father, I said to myself, he will be content with my veneration and affectionate regard; but if the name of husband mingle with titles already sacred, what have you not a right to expect? Have I wherewith to

"acquit

“acquit me towards you?—“ Ah! that amiable modesty is worthy of adorning thy virtues. Yes, thou half of myself, your duties are fulfilled, if you return my affection. Thy image has followed me every where. My soul flew back towards thee across the depths which separated us : I have taught the name of Coraly to the echoes of another world.” — “ Madam,” said he to Juliet, “ pardon me, If I envy you the happiness of possessing her. It will soon be my turn to watch over a health which is so precious to me. I will leave you the care of Nelson’s : it is a charge not less dear to me. Let us live happy, my friends : it is you who have made me know the value of life ; and, in exposing it, I have often experienced by what strong ties I was attached to you.”

It was settled, that in less than a week Coraly should be married to Blandford. In the mean time, she remained with Juliet, and Nelson never quitted her. But his courage was exhausted in supporting the young Indian’s. To be perpetually constrained to suppress his own tears, to dry up those of a fond girl, who sometimes distressed at his feet, sometimes fainting and falling into his arms, conjuring him to have pity on her, without allowing one moment to his own weakness, and
without

without ceasing to recall to his mind his cruel resolution, this trial appears above the strength of nature: accordingly Nelson's virtue abandoned him every moment. "Leave me," said he to her, "unhappy girl! I am not a tiger; I have a feeling soul, and you distract it. Dispose of yourself, dispose of my life; but leave me to die faithful to my friend."—"And can I, at the hazard of your life, use my own will? Ah! Nelson, at least promise me to live; no longer for me, but for a sister who adores you."—"I should deceive you, Coraly. Not that I would make any attempt upon myself; but see the condition to which my grief has reduced me; see the effect of my remorse and shame anticipated; shall I be the less odious, less inexorable to myself, when the crime shall be accomplished?"—"Alas! you talk of a crime! Is it not one then to tyrannize over me?"—"You are free; I no longer require any thing; I know not even what are your duties; but I know too well my own, and I will not betray them."

It was thus that their private conversation served only to distress them. But Blandford's presence was still more painful to them. He came every day to converse with them, not on the barren topics of love, but the care he took, that every thing in his house should breathe

breathe cheerfulness and ease, that every thing there should forestall the desires of his wife, and contribute to her happiness. "If I die, without children," said he, "the half of my wealth is her's, the other half is his who, after me, shall know how to please and to console her for having lost me.— That, Nelson, is your place; there is no growing old in my profession: take my place when I shall be no more. I have not the odious pride of wanting my wife to continue faithful to my shade. Coraly is formed to embellish the world, and to enrich nature with the fruits of her fecundity."

It is more easy to conceive than describe the situation of our two lovers. Their concern and confusion were the same in both; but it was a kind of consolation to Nelson, to see Coraly in such worthy hands, whereas Blandford's favours and love were an additional torment to her. On losing Nelson, she would have preferred the desertion of all nature, to the cares, the favours, the love of all the world beside. It was decided, however, even with the consent of this unfortunate girl, that there was no longer time to hesitate, and that it was necessary she should submit to her fate.

She was led then as a victim to that house, which she had cherished as her first asylum, but which she now dreaded as her grave.—

Blandford received her there as sovereign : and what she could not conceal of the violent state of her soul, he attributes to timidity, to the concern which, at her age, the approach of marriage inspires.

Nelson had summoned up all the strength of a stoical soul, in order to present himself at this festival with a serene countenance.

They read the settlement which Blandford had made. It was from one end to the other a monument of love, esteem, and beneficence. Tears flowed from every eye, even from Coraly's,

Blandford approaches respectfully, and stretching out his hand to her, "Come," said he, "my best-beloved, give to this pledge " of your fidelity, to this title of the happiness " of my life, the inviolable sanctity with which " it is to be clothed."

Coraly, on doing herself the utmost violence, had scarce strength to advance, and put her hand to the pen. At the instant she would have signed, her eyes were covered with a mist ; her whole body was seized with a sudden trembling ; her knees bent under her, and she was on the point of falling, if Blandford had not supported her. Shocked, congealed with fear, he looks at Nelson, and sees him with the paleness of death on his countenance. Lady Albury had ran up to Coraly, in order to

assist her : " O, heaven," cries Blandford, " what is it that I see ! Sorrow, death surround me. What was I going to do ? " What have you concealed from me ? Ah ! " my friend, could it be possible ! See the light again, my dear Coraly, I am not cruel, I am not unjust ; I wish only for " your happiness."

The women who surrounded Coraly, exerted themselves to revive her ; and decency obliged Nelson and Blandford to keep at a distance. But Nelson remained immoveable, with his eyes fixed on the ground, like a criminal. Blandford comes up to him, and clasps him in his arms. " Am I no longer thy " friend ?" said he ; " art thou not still the " half of myself ? Open thy heart to me, and " tell me what has passed No, tell me " nothing : I know all. This poor girl could " not see thee, hear thee, and live with thee, " without loving thee. She has sensibility, " she has been touched with thy goodness, " and thy virtues. Thou hast condemned " her to silence, thou hast required of her the " most grievous sacrifice. Ah, Nelson ! had " it been accomplished, what a misfortune ! " Just heaven would not permit it ; nature, " to whom thou didst violence, has resumed " her rights. Do not afflict thyself : it is a " crime which she has spared thee. Yes, the

K 2

" devotion

“devotion of Coraly was the crime of friendship.” “I confess it,” replied Nelson, throwing himself at his knees: “I have been the innocent cause of thy unhappiness, of my own, and that of this amiable girl; but I call fidelity, friendship, honour, to witness . . .” — “No oaths,” interrupted Blandford: “they wrong us both.” “Go, my friend,” continued he, raising him, “thou wouldest not be in my arms, if I had been able to suspect thee of a shameful perfidy. What I foresaw is come to pass, but without thy consent. What I have just now seen is a proof of it, and that very proof is unnecessary: thy friend has no need of it.” “It is certain,” replied Nelson, “that I have nothing to reproach myself, but my presumption and imprudence. But that is enough, and I shall be punished for it. Coraly will not be thine, but I will not be her’s.” — “Is it thus that you answer a generous friend?” replied Blandford to him, in a firm and grave tone of voice. “Do you think yourself obliged to observe childish punctilios with me? Coraly shall not be mine, because she would not be happy with me. But an honest man for a husband, whom but for you she would have loved, is a loss to her; of which you are the cause; and which you must repair. The contract

"is drawn up, they shall change the names ;
"but I insist that the articles remain. What
"I meant to give Coraly as a husband, I now
"give her as a father. Nelson, make me
"not blush by an humiliating refusal."—
"I am confounded, and not surprised," said
Nelson, "at this generosity which over-
"powers me. I must subscribe to it with
"confusion, and revere it in silence. If I
"knew not how well respect reconciles itself
"to friendship, I should no longer dare to
"call you my friend."

During this conversation Coraly had recovered, and again saw with terror the light which was restored to her. But what was her surprise, and the revolution which was suddenly wrought in her soul ! "All is known, "all is forgiven," said Nelson, embracing "her, fall at the feet of our benefactor: from "his hand I receive your's." Coraly would have been profuse in her acknowledgments ; "You are a child," said Blandford to her : "You should have told me every thing. Let "us talk no more of it ; but let us never "forget that there are trials, to which virtue "itself would do well not to expose herself."

THE

MISANTHROPE CORRECTED.

THERE is no correcting the natural disposition, they will tell me, and I agree to it; but among a thousand combined accidents which compose a character, what eye is sufficiently fine, to distinguish that indelible characteristic? How many vices and irregularities are attributed to nature, which she never occasioned? Such is, in man, the hatred of mankind: it is a factitious character; a part which we take up, out of whim, and maintain through habit; but in acting which, the soul is under restraint, from which she struggles to be delivered. What happened to the Misanthrope, whom Moliere has painted, is an instance of it; and we are now going to see how he was brought to himself again.

Alcestes, dissatisfied, as you know, with his mistress, and his judges, detesting the city and court, and resolved to fly mankind, retired very far from Paris, into the Voges, near Laval, on the banks of the Vologne. This river, whose shells contain the pearl, is still
more



Sharp sculp.

THE MISANTHORPE CORRECTED.



more valuable, on account of the fertility which it communicates to its borders. The valley which it waters, is a beautiful meadow. On one side arise smiling hills, interspersed with woods and hamlets ; on the other extend, in a plain, vast fields covered with corn. Thither Alcestes retired, to live forgotten by all nature. Free from cares and duties, wholly resigned to himself, and at length delivered from the hateful sight of the world, he praised heaven for having broken all his connections. A little study, much exercise, the less lively but tranquil pleasures of a gentle vegetation, in one word, a life peaceably active preserved him from the dullness of solitude ; he desired, he regretted nothing.

One of the pleasures of his retreat was to see around him the earth, cultivated and fertile, nourish a people who seemed to be happy. A Misanthrope, who is such from virtue, thinks that he hates men, only because he loves them. Alcestes felt an emotion mingled with joy, at the sight of his fellow-creatures, rich by the labour of their own hands. "These people," said he, "are very happy in being yet half savages : they would soon be corrupted if they were more civilized."

Walking in the fields, he accosts a labourer, ploughing and singing. "God preserve you, good man," said he to him : "you are very
K 4 "merry!"

"merry!" "According to custom," replied the villager.—"I am very glad of it: it proves that you are content with your condition."
 —"And well I may."—"Are you married?"
 —"Yes, thank heaven."—"Have you any children?"—"I had five; I have lost one; but that loss may be repaired."—"Is your wife young?"—"Twenty-five."—"Is she handsome?"—"She is so to me; but she is better than handsome, she is good."—"And you love her?"—"Love her! who would not love her?"—"She loves you too, without doubt?"—"O, as to that, most heartily, and as well as before marriage?"—"You loved one another then before marriage?"—"Or else should we have taken each other?"—"And your children, do they come on well?"—"Ah, that is a pleasure. The eldest is but five; he has more wit than his father already. And my two girls! they are charming.—It would be a very great pity if they should want husbands! The youngest boy sucks still; but the little rogue will be a sturdy fellow. Would you believe it? He beats his sisters, when they go to kiss their mother. He is afraid that they are coming to take the breast from him."—"All this is very happy?"—"Happy? I think so. You should see our joy, when I return from
 "work.

“work. You would think they had not seen
“me for a year : I know not which to listen
“to. My wife hangs upon my neck, my
“daughters jump into my arms, my eldest boy
“seizes me by the legs, not one of them, even
“to little Jacky himself, who rolling on his
“mother’s bed, stretches out his little hands
“to me ; while I laugh and cry, and kiss
“them ; for all this moves me.”—“I believe
“it.”—“You ought to feel it, for to be sure
“you are a father.”—“I have not that hap-
“piness.”—“So much the worse ; there is
“no other joy.”—“And how do you live ?”
—“Very well ; upon excellent bread, good
“milk, and the fruits of our orchard. My
“wife, with a little bacon, makes a supper
“of cabbage, of which the king himself might
“eat. Then we have the eggs of our fowls ;
“and on Sundays we regale ourselves, and
“drink a cup of wine.”—“Yes, but when
“the year turns out bad ?”—“We are pre-
“pared for it, and live comfortably on what
“we have saved in a good one.”—“Ay, but
“the rigour of the weather, the cold, the
“rain, the heats ?”—“We are accustomed to
“them ; and if you knew what pleasure we
“have in coming in the evening to breathe
“the fresh air, after a summer’s day ; or, in
“winter, to unnumb one’s hands at a fire of
“good brush-wood, between one’s wife and

" one's children ! And then we sup heartily,
 " and go to sleep ; and do you think that we
 " ever bestow a thought upon the bad wea-
 " ther ? Sometimes my wife says to me : My
 " good man, do you hear the wind and the
 " storm ? Ah, if you were now in the fields !
 " I am not there, I am with thee, I tell her ;
 " and in order to assure her of it, I press her
 " against my bosom. Ah, Sir, there are a
 " great many of the fine people who do not
 " live so happy as we."—" And the taxes ?"
 —" We pay them cheerfully : it must be so.
 " All the country cannot be noble. The
 " lord of the manor, and the judge, cannot
 " come to labour. They supply our wants,
 " we supply theirs ; and every state of life,
 " as it is said, has its troubles."—" What
 " equity !" said the Misanthrope. " There
 " now, in two words, is the whole œconomy
 " of primitive society. O Nature ! there is
 " nothing just but thee : it is in thy unculti-
 " vated simplicity that we find sound reason.
 " But in paying the tribute so well, do not
 " you give room to be charged more heavily ?"
 —" We used to fear it formerly ; but, thank
 " God, the lord of the manor has freed us
 " from that uneasiness. He performs the duty
 " of our good king : he imposes, he receives
 " himself, and in cases of necessity he makes
 " the advances. He takes care of us, as if
 " we

“we were his children.” — “And who is this gallant man?” — “The Viscount de Laval. He is well enough known: the whole country respects him.” — “Does he reside in his castle?” — “He passes eight months of the year there.” — “And the rest?” — “At Paris, I believe.” — “Does he see company?” — “The townsmen of Bruyers, and sometimes our old folks, who go to eat his soup, and to chatter with him.” — “And does he bring any body from Paris?” — “Nobody but his daughter.” — “He is very much in the right. And how does he employ himself?” — “In judging us, reconciling us, marrying our children, maintaining peace in our families, and assisting them when the seasons are bad.” “I will go,” said Alcestes, “to see his village: it must be moving.”

He was surprised to find the roads, even the cross-roads, bordered with hedges, and kept with care; but having met people busied in keeping them even, “Ah,” said he, “there are the statute-labourers.” “Statute-labourers!” replied an old man, who presided over these works, “we know none such here: these people are paid: nobody is constrained. Only, if there come to the village a vagabond, an idle fellow, I am sent to him; and if he wants bread, he earns it, or he goes

“ goes to seek it elsewhere.”—“ And who
 “ has established this happy policy ?” —“ Our
 “ good lord, the father to us all.” —“ And
 “ the funds for this expense, who provides
 “ them ?” —“ The community ; and as she
 “ imposes them herself, it comes not to pass,
 “ as is seen elsewhere, that the rich are ex-
 “ empted at the charge of the poor.”

Alcestes redoubled his esteem for the wise
 and beneficent man who governed this little
 people. “ How powerful would a king be,”
 said he, “ and a state how happy, if all the
 “ great proprietors of lands would follow the
 “ example of this nobleman ! But Paris ab-
 “ sorbs both the wealth and the men : it
 “ strips, it carries away every thing.”

The first glance of the village presented him
 with the image of ease and health. He enters
 into a plain and large building, which was to
 appearance a public edifice, and there he finds
 a multitude of children, women, and old men,
 employed in useful labours. Idleness was not
 permitted, excepting to the last weakness. In-
 fancy, almost at its issuing from the cradle,
 acquired the habit and relish of labour, and
 old age, at the brink of the grave, still exer-
 cised its trembling hands. The season in
 which the earth rests, assembled to the work-
 house the vigorous men ; and then the shuttle,
 the saw, and the hatchet, gave a new value to
 the

the productions of nature. "I am not surprised," said Alcestes, "that these people should be exempt from vice and want.— They are laborious and perpetually employed." He enquired how the work-house had been established. "Our good lord," said they to him, "advanced the money.— It was but a small matter at first, and all was done at his risk, at his expense, and his profit; but after being well assured that it was advantageous, he gave up the undertaking to us: he interferes no longer, except in protecting it; and every year he gives to the village the tools of some one of our arts: it is the present he makes at the first wedding that is celebrated in the year." "I must see this man," said Alcestes; "his character pleases me."

He advances into the village, and he observes a house into which the people are going and coming with uneasiness. He demands the cause of these movements; they tell him that the head of the family is at the point of death. He enters, and sees an old man, who, with an expiring, but serene eye, seems to bid adieu to his children, who melt into tears around him. He distinguishes, in the midst of the crowd, a person moved, but less afflicted, who encourages and consoles them. By his plain and grave dress, he takes
him

him for the physician of the village. "Sir," said he to him, "be not surprised at seeing here a stranger. It is not an idle curiosity that brings me hither. These good people may have need of assistance at so melancholy a juncture; and I come"

"Sir," said the Viscount to him, "my peasants thank you; I hope as long as I live, they will have need of nobody; and if money could prolong the days of a good man, this worthy father of a family should be restored to his children." "Ah, Sir," said Alcestes, on discovering Monsieur de Laval by this talk, "pardon an uneasiness which I ought not to have had." "I am not offended," replied M. de Laval, "that a good deed should be disputed with me; but may I know who you are, and what brings you here?" At the name of Alcestes he recollected that censor of human nature whose rigour was so well known; but, without being intimidated, "Sir," said he, "I am very glad to have you in my neighbourhood, and if I can be of service to you in any thing, I beg you to command me."

Alcestes went to visit M. de Laval, and was received by him with that plain and serious gentility which proclaims neither the want, nor desire of being connected.—

"There

“There now,” said he, “is a man of some
“reserve, I like him the better for it.” He
felicitated M. de Laval on the pleasures of his
solitude. “You come to live here,” said he,
“far from mankind, and you are very much
“in the right to fly from them!”—“I, Sir!
“I do not fly from mankind. I have neither
“the weakness to fear them, the pride to
“despise them, nor the misfortune to hate
“them.” This answer came so home, that
Alcestes was disconcerted at it. But he would
support what he had set out with, and he be-
gan the satyr of the world. “I have lived in
“the world, as well as others,” said M. de
Laval, “and I have not found it so wicked.
“There are vices and virtues in it, good and
“evil, I confess; but nature is so com-
“pounded, we must know how to accom-
“modate ourselves to it.” “Ay, but,”
said Alcestes, “in that compound the good is
“so very small, and the evil so predominant,
“that the latter choaks up the former.”—
“Ah, Sir,” replied the Viscount, “if we
“were as strongly fired with the good as
“with the evil, if we used the same warmth
“in publishing it, and good examples were
“posted up as bad ones are, can you doubt
“but that the good ones would carry it on
“the balance? But gratitude speaks so low,
“and complaint declaims so loud, that we
“only

“only hear the latter. Esteem and friendship are commonly moderate in their commendations: they imitate the modesty of the virtuous in praising them; whereas, resentment and injury exaggerate every thing to excess. Thus we see not the good, but through a medium which lessens it, and we view the evil through a vapour which magnifies it.”

“Sir,” said Alcestes to the Viscount, “you make me wish to think like you; and though I might have on my side the melancholy truth, your mistake would be preferable.”—“Why, yes, without doubt: fretfulness is of no service. A fine part for a man to play, to be out of humour like a child, and get into a corner, to pout at all the world; and why? For the bickerings of the circle in which we live: as if all nature were an accomplice and responsible for the injuries at which we are hurt!”—“You are right,” said Alcestes: “it would be unjust to render man a solitary animal; but how many griefs have we not to reproach them with in common? Believe me, Sir, my prejudice has serious and weighty motives. You will do me justice, when you know me. Permit me to see you often.” “Often, that is difficult,” said the Viscount: “my time is very much
“taken

“ taken up ; and my daughter and I have our
“ studies, which leave us little leisure ; but
“ sometimes, if you please, we will enjoy
“ our neighbourhood, at our ease, and with-
“ out laying any constraint on each other :
“ for the privilege of the country is to have
“ it in our power to be alone when we have
“ a mind.”

“ This man is rare in his species,” said
Alcestes on going away. “ And his daugh-
“ ter, who listened to us with the air of so
“ tender a veneration for her father : this
“ daughter, brought up under his eyes, ac-
“ customed to a plain life, pure manners and
“ pleasures that are innocent, will be an esti-
“ mable woman, or, I am very much mis-
“ taken ; at least, resumed he, unless they
“ lead her astray in that Paris, where every
“ thing is ruined.”

If we were to represent to ourselves deli-
cacy and sentiment personified, we should
have the idea of Ursula's beauty. (It was
thus that Mademoiselle de Laval was called.)
Her figure was such as imagination gives to
the youngest of the graces. She was eighteen
years complete, and by the freshness, and
regularity of her charms, one might see that
nature had just put the last hand to her.—
When unmoved, the lilies of her complexion
prevailed over the roses ; but on the slightest
emotion

emotion of her soul, the roses effaced the lilies. It was little to have the colouring of flowers, her skin had also that fineness, and that down so soft, so velvet-like, which nothing has yet tarnished. But it was in the features of Ursula's countenance that a thousand charms varied perpetually, displayed themselves successively. In her eyes, sometimes a modest languor, a timid sensibility seemed to issue from her soul, and to express itself by her looks; sometimes a noble severity, and commanding with sweetness, moderated the touching lustre of it; and we saw there reigning by turns severe decency, fearful modesty, and lively and tender voluptuousness. Her voice and mouth were of that kind which embellish every thing; her lips could not move without discovering new attractions; and when she condescended to smile, her very silence was ingenuous. Nothing more simple than her attire, and nothing more elegant. In the country, she let grow her hair, which was of a pale white, of the softest tint, and ringlets, which art could not hold captive, floated around her ivory neck, and waved down upon her beautiful bosom. The Misanthrope had found in her the genteelest air, and the most decent conversation. "It would be a pity," said he, "that she should fall into bad hands: she
" might

" might make an accomplished woman.—
" Indeed, the more I think of it the more
" I congratulate myself in having her father
" for a neighbour ; he is an upright man, a
" gallant man : I do not believe that he has
" a very right way of thinking ; but he has
" an excellent heart."

Some days after, M. de Laval in walking out returned his visit ; and Alcestes talked to him of the pleasure which he must have in making people happy. " It is a fine example," added he, " and to the shame of mankind a pretty rare one ! How many folks, richer and more powerful than you, are only a burthen to the people !" " I neither excuse them, nor blame them," replied M. de Laval. " To do good, there must be the power ; and when we can, we ought to know how to seize it. But think not that it is so easy to effect it. It is not sufficient to be dexterous enough ; we must be also happy enough ; we must know how to treat just, sensible, docile minds ; and frequently a great deal of address and patience is necessary to lead on a people, naturally diffident and fearful, to what is advantageous to them." — " Truly," said Alcestes, " it is the excuse which they make : but do you think it a very solid one ? And the obstacles which
" you

"you have overcome, cannot they also con-
 quer them?" "I have been," said M. de
 Laval, "solicited by opportunity, and se-
 conded by circumstances. This people,
 newly conquered, thought themselves un-
 done without resource, and the moment
 that I held open my arms to them, their
 despair made them rush into them. At the
 mercy of an arbitrary impost, they had
 conceived so much terror, that they chose
 rather to endure their vexations than to
 show a little ease. The expenses of the
 levy aggravated the impost; these good
 people were over-rated; and poverty was
 the asylum into which discouragement had
 thrown them. On my arrival here I found
 established, this distressing and destructive
 maxim to the country: *The more we labour*
the more we shall be trampled upon. The
 men durst not be laborious, the women
 trembled at becoming fruitful. I went
 back to the source of the evil. I addressed
 myself, to the man appointed to collect the
 tribute." "Sir," said I to him, "my
 vassals groan under the burthens of con-
 straint: I would wish to hear no more of
 it. Let us see what they owe yet of the
 year's impost; I am come to acquit them."
 "Sir,?" replied the receiver to me, "that
 cannot be." "Why so?" said I.—"It is
 not

“not the rule.” — “How! not the rule to
“pay the king the tribute which he demands?
“to pay it him with the least expence possi-
“ble, and with the least delay?” — “Yes.”
said he, “that is the king’s interest; but not
“mine. What would become of me, if it
“were to be paid down? The expenses are
“the perquisites of my office.” “To so
“good a reason, I had no reply; and without
“insisting farther, went to see the intend-
“ant.” “I beg two favours of you,” said
I to him: “one, that I may be permitted,
“every year, to pay the tribute for my vas-
“sals; the other, that their district may
“experience only the variations of the public
“tax. I obtained what I asked.”

“Friends,” said I to my peasants, whom
I assembled at my arrival, “I now give you
“notice, that it is in my hands you are to
“deposit for the future, the just tribute
“which you owe to the king. No more
“vexations, no more expense. Every
“Sunday, at the parish bank, your wives
“shall bring their savings, and you will be
“insensibly cleared. Labour, cultivate your
“estates, increase their value to a hundred
“fold; may the ground enrich you; you
“shall not be charged the more for it: I,
“your father, will be answerable to you for
“it. Those who shall be deficient, I will
“assist;

“ assist ; and a few days of the dead season of
“ the year, employed on my works, will
“ reimburse me what I advance.

“ This plan was approved, and we have
“ followed it. Our farmers’ wives never fail
“ to bring me their little offering. On re-
“ ceiving it, I encourage them, I tell them
“ of our good king ; they go away with
“ tears in their eyes : thus I make an act of
“ love of what they looked upon, before my
“ time, as an act of servitude.

“ The statute-works had their turn, and the
“ intendant, who detested them, but knew
“ not how to remedy them, was enchanted
“ at the method which I had taken to exempt
“ my village from them.

“ Lastly, as there was here a great deal of
“ superfluous time, and useless hands, I
“ established the work-house, which you
“ may have seen. It is the property of the
“ community ; they administer it under their
“ own eyes : every one works there ; but
“ that labour is not sufficiently paid to divert
“ them from working in the fields. The
“ husbandman employs in it only the time
“ which would otherwise be lost. The pro-
“ fit which they draw from it, forms a fund
“ which is employed in contributing to the
“ militia, and to the expences of public
“ works. But an advantage, more precious
“ still,

" still from this establishment, is to have increased the human race. When children are a charge, we get no more than we are able to maintain ; but from the moment, that at their issue from the cradle, they are able to provide for their own subsistence, nature delivers herself up to her attraction, without reserve or uneasiness. We seek the means of population ; there is but one : the subsistence, the employment of mankind. As they are born only to live, we must ensure them a livelihood at their birth."

" Nothing wiser than your principles, nothing more virtuous than your cares : but confess," replied the Misanthrope, " that this good, important as it is, is not so difficult as to discourage those who love it ; and that if there were men like you . . ."—" Say, rather, if they were so situated. I have had circumstances in my favour, and every thing depends upon that. We see what is right ; we love it ; we wish to affect it ; but obstacles arise on every step we take. There needs but one to prevent it ; and instead of one, there arise a thousand. I was here very much at my ease : not a man of credit had an interest in the evil which I meant to destroy ; and how little would
" have

“ have been sufficient to prevent my being
 “ able to remedy it? Suppose, instead of a
 “ tractable attendant, I had been under the
 “ necessity of seeing, persuading, prevailing
 “ on an absolute man, jealous of his power,
 “ entirely led by his own opinions, or swayed
 “ by the counsels of his subaltern officers.—
 “ Nothing of all this scheme could have taken
 “ place: they would have told me not to
 “ busy myself, but to let things of this kind
 “ alone. Thus it is that good-will remains
 “ often useless on the part of the rich. I
 “ know that you do not suspect it; but there
 “ is in your prejudices more caprice than you
 “ imagine.”

Alcestes, touched to the quick by this reproach, from a man whose esteem was to him of so great value, endeavoured to justify himself. He had told him of the law-suit he had lost, of the coquette who had deceived him, and of all his subjects of complaint against human nature.

“ Truly,” said the Viscount to him, this
 “ was a mighty matter to make one uneasy!
 “ You go to choose among a thousand
 “ women a giddy creature, who amuses
 “ herself, and makes a fool of you, as it
 “ were with reason; you take, most seriously,
 “ that love of which she makes a mere diversion;
 “ who is to blame? But granting
 “ her

“ her wrong, are all women like her?
“ What! because there are knaves among
“ the men, are you and I the less honest on
“ that account? In the individual, who hurts
“ you, you hate the species! There is ca-
“ price, neighbour, there is caprice in this,
“ you must agree.

“ You have lost a cause which you thought
“ just; but does not a suitor, who is a
“ person of integrity, always think that he
“ has a good cause? Are you alone more
“ disinterested, more infallible than your
“ judges? And if they have wanted lights,
“ are they criminal for that? I, Sir, when
“ I see men devote themselves to a state of
“ life which has many troubles in it, and
“ very few pleasures, which imposes on their
“ manners, all the constraint of the most
“ severe decorum, which requires an unre-
“ mitted application, a steady recollection,
“ a labour without any salary, where virtue
“ herself is almost without lustre; when I see
“ them environed with the luxury and
“ pleasures of an opulent city, live retired,
“ solitary, in the frugality, simplicity, and
“ modesty of the first ages, I consider, as
“ a sacrilege, the reproach of their equity.
“ Now, such is the life of the greater part
“ of the judges whom you accuse upon such
“ slight foundations. It is not some giddy

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“ persons,

" persons whom you see fluttering in the
 " world, that hold the balance of the laws.—
 " Till such time as they become more pru-
 " dent, they have at least the modesty to be
 " silent before consummate judges. The lat-
 " ter are sometimes mistaken, without doubt,
 " because they are not angels; but they are
 " less of men than you and I; and I will
 " never be persuaded, that a venerable old
 " man, who at the break of day drags himself
 " to the hall with a tottering pace, goes there
 " to commit injustice.

" With regard to the court, there are so
 " many interests in it, so complicated, and
 " so powerful, which thwart and oppose
 " each other, that it is natural that men
 " should there be more delivered up to their
 " passions, and more wicked than elsewhere.
 " But neither you nor I have passed through
 " these great trials of ambition and envy: and
 " it has depended, perhaps, on but a trifle,
 " that we have not been, as well as others,
 " false friends and base flatterers. Believe
 " me, Sir, few people have a right to settle
 " the *police* of the world."

" All honest people have that right," said
 Alcestes; " and if they would league them-
 " selves together, the wicked would not
 " have so much audaciousness and credit in
 " the world." " When that league is
 " formed,"

“formed,” said M. de Laval, going away, “we will both enroll ourselves in it. Till then, neighbour, I advise you to do without noise, in your little corner, the utmost good you can, by taking for a rule the love of mankind, and in reserving your hatred for a few sad exceptions.”

“It is a very great pity,” said Alcestes, when M. de Laval was gone, “that goodness should be always accompanied with weakness, while wickedness has so much strength and vigour !” “It is a very great pity,” said M. de Laval, “that this honest man has taken a bias, which renders him useless to himself and others ! He has uprightness, he loves virtue ; but virtue is but a chimera without the love of human nature.” Thus both, judging each other, were displeased with one another.

An incident pretty singular, rendered Alcestes still less at his ease with M. de Laval. The Baron of Blonzac, a right Gascon, a man of honour, but haughty, and a Misanthrope in his manner, had married the Canoness of Remiremont, a relation of the Viscount. His garrison was in Lorraine. He came to see M. de Laval ; and whether it was to amuse himself, or to correct two Misanthropes by means of each other, M. de Laval wanted to set them

by the ears. He sent to invite Alcestes to dinner.

Among men, table-talk turns pretty often upon politics; and the Gascon, from the moment they had dined, began laying on, and drinking at a great rate. "I make no point of concealing it," said he; "I have taken an aversion to the world. I would be two thousand leagues out of my own country, and two thousand years removed from my own age. It is the country of whores and knaves; it is the age of favourites, intrigue and favour have done their parts, and have forgot nothing but merit. He that pays his court obtains every thing and he that does his duty has nothing. Myself, for example, who have never known but to march where honour calls, and to fight as becomes a soldier, I am known by the enemy; but may the devil take me if either the ministry or the court, know that I exist. If they were to hear any mention of me, they would take me for one of my grandfathers; and if they should be told that a cannon-ball had taken off my head, I will lay a wager they would ask, if there were any more Blonzac's?"—"Why do not you show yourself?" said M. de Laval to him. "There is no necessity to let one's self be forgot."—"Why, my lord, I show myself

"myself in the day of battle. Is it at Paris
"that the colours are flying?"

In the midst of this talk, letters were brought M. de Laval from Paris. He asks leave to read them, "in order to know," said he, "if there be any thing new," and one of his letters informs him, that the command of the citadel, which he solicited for M. de Blonzac, without his knowledge, had just been granted him. "Hold," said he to him, "there now
"is one who regards you." Blonzac read, leaped with joy, and ran to embrace the Viscount; but after the sally he had made, he durst not mention what had happened to him. Alcestes believing he had found in him a second, did not fail in urging him. "There," said he, "there now is an example of those
"acts of injustice which shock me: a man
"of birth, a good soldier, after having served
"the state, remains forgotten, unrewarded;
"and let them tell me now, that all goes well."
"Why," replied Blonzac, "we must be
"just: every thing goes not so ill as is said.
"Rewards are to be waited for a little; but
"they come in time. It is not the fault of
"the ministry, if more services are performed
"than there are rewards to be bestowed;
"and, in fact, they do what they can." Alcestes was a little surprised at this change of language, and the apologetical tone which

Blonzac assumed, during the rest of the entertainment. "Come," said the Viscount, "in order to reconcile you, let us drink the Commandant's health;" and he published what he had just learnt. "I ask the gentleman's pardon," said Alcestes, "for having dwelt on his complaints: I did not know the reasons which he had to retract them."—"I!" said Blonzac, "I have no animosity, and I come to like a child."—"You see," resumed M. de Laval, "that a Misanthrope is to be brought back to reason,"—"Yes," replied Alcestes, "when he regulates his sentiments on his own personal interest."—"Ah, Sir," said Blonzac, "do you know any one who is warm for what touches him neither nearly, nor at a distance?"—"Every thing that concerns humanity," replied Alcestes, "touches a good man nearly; and doubt not but there are friends enough of the order, to hate the evil as evil, without any respect to themselves."—"I will believe it," replied the Gascon, "when I see any one uneasy at what passes in China; but as long as people are afflicted only at the hurt which they feel themselves, or which they may feel, I shall believe that they think only of themselves, while they have the air of being taken up with the thought of others. As for me, I
"am

"am sincere: I never gave myself up as an advocate for the discontented. Let every one plead his own cause. I complained while I had reason to complain; I now make my peace with the world, as soon as I have reason to be satisfied with it."

As much as the scene with Blonzac disturbed Alcestes, so much did it rejoice M. de Laval and his daughter. "There," said they, "has our Misanthrope received a good lesson."

Whether it was shame, or policy, he was some days without seeing them. He came again, however, one afternoon. The Viscount was gone to the village: Mademoiselle de Laval received him; and on seeing himself alone with her, a transport seized him, which he had some difficulty to conceal.

"We have not had the honour of seeing you," said she to him, "since M. de Blonzac's visit; what say you to that gentleman?"—"Why, he is a man like the rest."—"Not so much like the rest: he speaks with an open heart, he says what others conceal; and that frankness makes him, in my opinion, a pretty singular character."—"Yes, Mademoiselle, frankness is rare; and I am very glad to see that at your age you are convinced of it. You will often have occasion to recollect it, I promise you. Ah! in what a world you

"are going to fall ! My lord excuses it in the
 "best manner he is able ; his own beautiful
 "soul does the rest of mankind the honour
 "to judge of them according to itself ; but
 "if you knew how dangerous and hateful
 "the greater part are !" — " You, for exam-
 "ple," said Ursula, smiling, " you have
 "very great reason to complain of it, is it
 "not true ?" — " Spare me, I pray you, and
 "attribute not to me the personalities of
 "M. Blonzac. I think as he does in certain
 "respects ; but our motives are not the same."
 — " I believe it : but explain to me what I
 "am not able to conceive. Vice and virtue,
 "I have been told, are nothing more than
 "relative terms. The one is vice, because it
 "hurts mankind : the other virtue, on ac-
 "count of the good which it occasions." —
 " Exactly so." — " To hate vice, to love vir-
 "tue, is therefore only to interest ourselves in
 "the welfare of mankind, and in order to in-
 "terest ourselves, we must love them. For
 "how can you at once interest yourself, and
 "hate them ?" — " I interest myself in the
 "welfare of the good whom I love, and I de-
 "test the wicked who hurt them ; but the
 "good are so very few in number, and the
 "world is so full of bad people." — " See
 "there now. Your hatred at least extends
 "not to all mankind. But do you think that
 "those

“ those whom you love are every where so few
“ in number ? Let us make a voyage together
“ in idea. Do you agree to it ? ” — “ With
“ all my heart ? ” — “ First, in the country,
“ are you not persuaded that there are mo-
“ rals, and if not virtues, at least simplicity,
“ goodness, innocence ? ” — “ There is also
“ commonly distrust and craft.” — “ Alas, I
“ can easily conceive what my father has said
“ more than once: craft and distrust are the
“ consequence of weakness. We find them
“ in the villagers, as in women and children.
“ They have every thing to fear ; they escape,
“ they defend themselves as well as they can ;
“ and we observe the same instinct in most
“ animals.” — “ Yes,” said Alcestes, “ and
“ that very circumstance forms the satyr of
“ the cruel and rapacious animals which they
“ have to guard against.” — “ I understand
“ you ; but we are now speaking only of the
“ country people, and you will agree with me,
“ that they are more worthy of pity than of
“ hatred.” — “ Oh, I agree,” — “ Let us pass
“ to the cities, and take Paris for example.” —
“ My God ! what an example you choose.”
“ Very well, even in that same Paris, the
“ common people are good : my father fre-
“ quents them : he goes often into those ob-
“ scure recesses, where poor families crowded
“ together groan in want ; he says that he

“ finds there a modesty, patience, an honesty;
 “ and sometimes even a nobleness of thinking,
 “ which moves and astonishes him.”—“ And
 “ this it is which ought to set us against an
 “ un pitying world, which forsakes suffering
 “ virtue, and pays respect to successful and
 “ insolent vice.”—“ Not so fast: we are at
 “ the common people. Agree that, in ge-
 “ neral, they are good, docile, courteous,
 “ honest, and that their own sincerity gives
 “ them a confidence which is very often
 “ abused.”—“ Oh, very often!”—“ You
 “ love the common people then? And in all
 “ places the common people form the greater
 “ number.”—“ Not every where,”—“ We
 “ are speaking only of our own country: it
 “ is with that which I would reconcile you
 “ at present. Now let us come to the great
 “ folks, and tell me, first, if my father has im-
 “ posed on me in it, when he has painted the
 “ manners of the women. As their du-
 “ ties,” said he, “ are included in the inte-
 “ rior of a private life, their virtues have
 “ nothing dazzling: it is only their vices
 “ that are conspicuous; and the folly of one
 “ woman, makes more noise than the discre-
 “ tion of a thousand. Thus the evil rises in
 “ evidence, and the good remains buried,
 “ My father adds, that one moment of weak-
 “ ness, one imprudence, ruins a woman, and
 “ that

“ that this blemish has sometimes tarnished a
“ thousand excellent qualities. He confesses,
“ in short, that the vice which we most re-
“ proach women with, and which does them
“ the most injury, hurts only themselves, and
“ that there is no reason for hating them.—
“ For the rest, what is it you reproach us
“ with? A little falsehood? But that is all
“ by agreement. Instructed from our infancy
“ to endeavour to please you, we have no
“ other care but to conceal what will not
“ please you. If we disguise ourselves, it is
“ only under those charms which you love
“ better than our own. And do you know
“ that nothing is more humiliating to us?
“ I am young; but I can easily perceive,
“ that the most beautiful act of our freedom,
“ is to show ourselves such as we are; but to
“ disguise one’s soul, and to disavow one’s
“ self, is of all the acts of servitude the most
“ degrading; and we must do to self-love the
“ most painful violence, to debase one’s self
“ to a lie, and to dissimulation? This is what
“ I find a woman a slave in; and it is a yoke
“ which has been imposed on us.” — “ If all
“ women thought as nobly as you do, beautiful
“ Ursula, they would not so lightly, and in
“ gaiety of heart, make a mere pastime of
“ deceiving us.” — “ If they deceive you,
“ it is your own fault. You are our kings;

“ convince us that you love nothing so much
 “ as truth; that truth alone pleases and
 “ touches you, and we will tell it you always.
 “ What is the ambition of a woman? To be
 “ lovely, and to be loved. Very well, write
 “ on the apple, *To the most sincere*; they will
 “ all dispute it with each other in unaffected
 “ simplicity. But you have written, *To the*
 “ *most seducing*; and each tries, who shall se-
 “ duce you the best. As for our jealousies,
 “ our little animosities, our tattlings, our
 “ bickerings; all these things are only amus-
 “ ing to you; and you will agree that your
 “ wars are of very different consequence.—
 “ Nothing remains then, but the frivolousness
 “ of our tastes and humours; but whenever
 “ you please, we shall be more solid; and,
 “ perhaps, there are many women who have
 “ seized, as it were by stealth, lights and
 “ principles which custom envied them.”—
 “ You are a proof of it,” said Alcestes to her,
 “ you whose soul is so much above your sex
 “ and your age.”—“ I am young,” replied Ur-
 sula, “ and I have a right to your indulgence;
 “ but the question is not concerning me, it is
 “ the world which you fly, which you abandon,
 “ without well knowing why. I have at-
 “ tempted the defence of the women; I leave
 “ to my father the care of accomplishing that
 “ of the men; but I tell you before-hand,
 “ that

“ that in giving me the picture of their society, he has often told me , that there were almost as few perverse minds as there are heroic souls, and that the majority was composed of weak, harmless people, who required nothing but peace and quiet.”—
“ Yes, peace and quiet, every one for himself, and at the expence of the person to whom it belongs. The world, Mademoiselle, is composed only of dupes and knaves : now, nobody would be a dupe ; and to speak only of what concerns yourself, I must tell you, that all the idle people there are at Paris of an age to please, are employed morning and evening in nothing else but in laying snares for the women.”—
“ Good !” said Ursula, “ they know it ; and my father is persuaded that this contest of gallantry on the one side, and coquetry on the other, is nothing but a diversion, in which both are agreed. Let who will be of the party : those who like not the sport, have only to keep themselves in their own corners ; and nothing, he says, is in less danger than virtue, when it is real.”—
“ You think so ?” — “ I am so thoroughly persuaded of it, that if ever I commit an indiscretion, I declare to you before-hand, it will be because I shall have liked it.”—
“ Without doubt they like it, but they like
“ it

“it when seduced by an enchanter who
 “makes you like it.” — “That also is an
 “excuse which at present I renounce: I have
 “no faith in enchantments.”

They were got so far, when Monsieur de Laval arrived from his walk. “What say
 “you to Alcestes?” continued Ursula. “He
 “would have me tremble at being exposed in
 “the world to the seduction of the men.”—
 “Why,” said the father, “we must not be
 “too confident; I do not think thee infalli-
 “ble.”—“No, but you shall be my guard;
 “and if you lose sight of me, you know what
 “you have promised me.”—“I will endea-
 “vour to keep my word.”—“May I be in
 “the secret?” demanded Alcestes, with a ti-
 mid air.—“There is no secret in it;” re-
 plied Ursula. “My father has had the good-
 “ness to instruct me in my duties; and if he
 “could guide me perpetually, I should be very
 “sure of not going astray. If I forgot my-
 “self, he would not forget me; accustomed
 “to read my soul, he would regulate all its
 “motions; but as he will not always have
 “his eyes upon me, he has promised me an-
 “other guide, a husband, which may be his
 “friend and mine, and who shall supply the
 “place of a father.”—“Add also, and of a
 “lover; for a young woman must have love.
 “I would have you be discreet, but I would
 “likewise

“ likewise have you be happy ; and if I had
“ the imprudence to give you a husband who
“ did not love you, or knew not how to please
“ you, I should no longer have the right of
“ taking it ill, that the desire of enjoying the
“ greatest of felicities, that of loving and
“ being loved, should make you forget my
“ lessons.”

Alcestes went away, charmed at the wisdom
of so good a father, and more still with the
candour and honesty of the daughter. “ A
“ distinction has been made,” said he, “ be-
“ tween the age of innocence and of reason,
“ but in her happy disposition, innocence and
“ reason unite. Her soul purifies, at the same
“ time that it enlightens itself. Ah ! if there
“ were a man worthy of cultivating gifts so
“ precious, what a source of delicious enjoy-
“ ments to him : There is nothing but this
“ world filled with shelves, from which it is
“ necessary to keep her at a distance. But if
“ she loved, what would it be to her ? A vir-
“ tuous and tender husband would suffice her,
“ would be to her instead of every thing,—
“ I dare believe, that at twenty-five, I was
“ the man who suited her. . . . At twenty-
“ five ! and what did I know then ? To
“ amuse myself, and run into dissipations ?
“ Was I capable of filling the place of a wise
“ and vigilant father ? I should have loved
“ her

“her to distraction ; but what confidence
 “should I have inspired into her ? It is not,
 “perhaps, too much yet to have fifteen years
 “more experience. But from eighteen to
 “forty, the interval must be frightful to her.
 “There is no thinking of it.”

He thought of it, however, all night long ;
 the next day he did nothing else ; and the
 day following, the first idea which presented
 itself to him was that of his amiable Ursula.
 “Ah, what a pity,” said he, “what a
 “pity, if she were to take to the vices of the
 “world ! her soul is pure as her beauty.—
 “What sweetness in her temper ! what
 “touching simplicity in her manners and
 “language ! They talk of eloquence ; is
 “there any truer ? It was impossible for her
 “to convince me, but she has persuaded me.
 “I have desired to think like her : I could
 “have wished that the illusion, which she
 “spread before me, were never dissipated.
 “Why have I not over her, or rather over
 “her father, that soft empire which she has
 “over me ! I would engage them to live here
 “in the simplicity of nature. And what
 “need should we have of the world ? Ah !
 “Three hearts, thoroughly united, two
 “lovers and a father, have they not, in the
 “intimacy of a mutual tenderness, sufficient
 “to render themselves fully happy ?”

In

In the evening, on walking out, his steps turned, as it were of themselves, towards M. de Laval's gardens. He found him there with the pruning knife in his hand, amidst his espaliers. "Confess," said he to him, "that these tranquil pleasures are well worth those noisy one's which people like, or think they like, at Paris." "Every thing has its season," replied the Viscount.— "I love the country, while it is alive ; I am useless at Paris, and my village has need of me ; I enjoy myself there and the good which I do ; my daughter is pleased and amused there ; this is what attracts and retains me. But think not that I live there alone. Our little town of Bruyeres is full of honest people, who love and cultivate letters. There is no part of the world, where the inhabitants have gentler manners. They are polite with freedom ; plain, yet informed. Candour, uprightness, and gaiety, are the character of that amiable people, they are social, humane, beneficent. Hospitality is a virtue, which the father transmits to his son. The women are sprightly and virtuous : and society, embellished by them, unites the charms of decency to the pleasures of liberty. But in enjoying so sweet a commerce, I cease not still to love Paris ; and
" if

“if friendship, the love of letters, con-
 “nections which I hold dear, did not recall
 “me there, the attraction of variety alone
 “would carry me back every year. The
 “most lively pleasures languish at last, and
 “the sweetest become insipid to him, who
 “knows not how to vary them.” “I can
 “conceive, however,” said the Misan-
 thrope, “that a society, not numerous, in-
 “timately connected with ease and truth,
 “might supply every thing to itself: and if
 “an offer, agreeable to Mademoiselle de
 “Laval, had no other inconvenience in it
 “than that of fixing her in the country, I
 “am persuaded that you yourself. . . .”
 “Why truly,” said M. de Laval, “if my
 “daughter could be happy there, I should
 “make her happiness mine: that is most
 [“certain. It is now fifty years since I have
 “lived for myself; it is high time now that
 “I should live for her. But we are not come
 “to that. My daughter loves Paris, and I
 “am rich enough to settle her there de-
 “cently.”

This was enough for Alcestes, and for
 fear of discovering himself, he turned the con-
 versation to gardening, by asking M. de
 Laval if he did not cultivate flowers? “They
 “pass away too soon,” replied the Viscount.
 “The pleasure and regret of them border so
 “nearly

“nearly on each other, and the idea of
“destruction intermingles I know not what
“of melancholy in the sentiment of enjoy-
“ment. In a word, I feel more chagrin in
“seeing a rose-bush stripped, than joy in
“seeing it flourish. The culture of kitchen-
“herbs has an interest more gradual, more
“supported, and, to say the truth, more
“satisfactory ; for it terminates in the use-
“ful. While art exercises and fatigues
“itself in varying the scenes of a flower
“garden, nature herself changes the deco-
“rations of the kitchen garden. How many
“metamorphoses, for example, have these
“peach-trees experienced, from the very
“budding of their leaves to the full maturity
“of their fruits ! talk to me, neighbour,
“of lasting pleasures, Those, which like
“flowers, endure but a day, cost too much
“to renew.”

Master of the father's temper, Alcestes
wanted to inform himself of that of the
daughter, and it was easy for him to have
a private conversation with her. “The
“more I penetrate,” said he to her, “into
“your father's heart, the more I admire and
“love him.” “So much the better,” said
Ursula, “his example will soften your
“manners ; he will reconcile you with those
“like him.”—“Like him ! Ah, how few
“there

"there are of them ! It is to him, without
 "doubt, a favour from heaven to have a
 "daughter like you, beautiful Ursula ; but
 "it is a happiness as rare to have a father
 "like him. May the husband which the
 "Almighty destines you, be worthy both of
 "one and the other !" — "Pray to heaven"
 said she smiling, "that he be not a Misan-
 "thrope ! Men of that cast are too difficult
 "to correct." "Would you like better,"
 said Alcestes, "one of those cold and trifling
 "men, whom every thing amuses and
 "nothing interests ; one of those weak and
 "easy men, whom the mode bends, and
 "fashions to her own taste, who are wax,
 "with respect to the manners of the time,
 "and to whom custom is the supreme law ?
 "A Misanthrope loves but few ; but when
 "he loves, he loves truly." — "Yes, I
 "perceive that such a conquest is flattering
 "to vanity ; but I am plain, and not vain.
 "I would not find in a heart devoted to me,
 "asperity or moroseness ; I would wish to
 "be able to communicate to it the softness
 "of my own temper, and that sentiment of
 "universal benevolence, which makes me
 "see men and things on the most com-
 "fortable side. I could not spend my life
 "in loving a man who would pass his in
 "hatred" — "That is not civil, for they
 "accuse

“accuse me of being a Misanthrope.” —
“Why, it is from you, and you alone,
“that I have taken the idea of that character:
“for M. de Blonzac’s humour was nothing
“but a fit of the pouts; and you have seen
“how small a matter could bring him to
“himself again; but a hatred of mankind,
“arising from reflection and founded on
“principles is horrible; and this is what
“you profess. I am persuaded that your
“aversion for the world is nothing but
“whim, an excess of virtue: you are not
“wicked, you are only rigid; and I believe
“you as little indulgent to yourself as to
“another; but this too severe and impatient
“probity, renders you unsociable: and you
“must confess, that a husband of that
“temper would not be entertaining?” —
“You would have a husband entertain you
“then?” — “And entertain himself,” re-
plied she, “with the same things as me;
“for if marriage be a participation of cares,
“it ought in return to be a society of plea-
“sures.”

“Nothing clearer,” said Alcestes to him-
self, after their conversation: “She could
“not have told me her thoughts more
“plainly, though she had divined mine.
“This is for me and my comrades, a dis-
“charge before hand. And what am I

“ thinking of ? I am forty years, free and
 “ easy ; it depends on myself only to be
 “ happy . . . Happy ! And can I be so alone,
 “ with a soul so sensible ! I fly the men !
 “ Ah ! it was the women, the handsome
 “ women, whom I ought to have flown.
 “ I thought I knew them sufficiently to have
 “ no more to fear from them ; but who
 “ could have expected what has happened
 “ to me ? I must to my misfortune, in the
 “ corner of a province, find beauty, youth,
 “ graces, wisdom, virtue herself, united in
 “ one and the same object. It seems as if
 “ love pursued me, and that he had pur-
 “ posely made this dear girl to confound and
 “ distress me. And what a way she takes to
 “ trouble my repose ! I detest airs ; nothing
 “ more simple than she. I despise coquetry ;
 “ she thinks not even of pleasing : I love,
 “ I adore candour ; her soul shows itself
 “ quite naked : she tells me, to my face,
 “ the most cruel truths. What would she
 “ do more, if she had resolved to turn my
 “ brain ? She is very young ; she will change :
 “ launched into the world, which she loves,
 “ she will soon assume the manners of it : and
 “ it is to be believed that she will at last be
 “ a woman like the rest . . . To be believed !
 “ Ah ! I do not believe it, and if I believed
 “ it, I should be too unjust. She will be the
 “ happiness and glory of her husband, if he be
 “ worthy

“worthy of her. And I, I shall live alone, detached from every thing, in a state of solitude and annihilation; for it must be confessed, the soul is annihilated as soon as it loves nothing any longer. What do I say? Alas! if I loved no longer, would that repose, that sleep of the soul be frightful to me? Flattering idea of a greater happiness! It is thou, thou that makest me perceive the void and dullness of myself. Ah! to cherish my solitude for ever, I should never have gone out of it.”

These reflexions, and these struggles, plunged him into a melancholy, which he thought it his duty to bury. Eight days having rolled away, the Viscount, surprised at not seeing him again, sent to know if he was sick. Alcestes returned answer, that in fact he had not been well for some time past. The sensible soul of Ursula was affected at this answer. She had entertained, since his absence, some suspicion of the truth; she was now the more persuaded of it, and reproached herself for having afflicted him. “Let us go and see him,” said the Viscount, “his condition moves my pity. Ah, daughter, what a gloomy and painful resolution is that of living alone, and of being sufficient to one’s self! man is too weak to support it.”

When

When Alcestes saw Mademoiselle de Laval, for the first time, enter his house, it seemed as if his habitation had transformed itself into a temple. He was seized with joy and respect; but the impression of melancholy still made an alteration in his features. "What is the matter, Alcestes?" said M. de Laval to him. "I find you afflicted; and you may hold of that moment to fly me. Do you think us some of those people who do not love sorrowful countenances, and who must always be accosted with a laugh? When you are easy and happy, keep at home; very well: but when you have any grief, come to me, either to pity or console you." Alcestes listened, and admired in silence. "Yes," said he, "I am struck with a thought which pursues and afflicts me: I would not, and I ought not to conceal it from you. Heaven is my witness, that after having renounced the world, I regretted nothing, when I knew you.— Since, I perceive that I deliver myself up to the pleasure of your company; that my soul is attached to you by all the ties of esteem and friendship: and that when they must be broken, alas! perhaps for ever, this retreat, which I should have cherished, will be my grave. My resolution, therefore, is taken, not to wait till the charm
" of

“ of so sweet a connection, render the solitude
“ in which I am to live completely odious;
“ and in revering you, in loving both the
“ one and the other, as two beings by which
“ nature is to procure honour to herself, and
“ of which the world is not worthy, I beg
“ you to permit me to bid you an eternal
“ farewell. Then taking the Viscount’s
“ hands, and kissing them respectfully, he
“ watered them with his tears. I will see
“ you no more, Sir, added he, but I will hold
“ you dear for ever.”

“ Nonsense,” said M. de Laval to him !
“ and who hinders us to live together, if
“ you like my acquaintance ? You have
“ taken an aversion to the world : A mere
“ whim ; but no matter : I know you have
“ a good heart ; and though our tempers
“ may not be the same, I see nothing incom-
“ patible in them ; and perhaps, they resem-
“ ble each other more than you imagine.
“ Why then take a resolution which afflicts
“ you, and which would afflict me ? you
“ think with sorrow on the moment of our
“ separation ; it depends only on yourself to
“ follow us. Nothing more easy than to
“ live at Paris, free, solitary, and detached
“ from the world. My company is not
“ tumultuous ; it shall be your’s ; and I
“ promise to you, I will not force you to see

"any but such as you shall esteem." "Your
 "goodness penetrates me," said Alcestes,
 "and I know what I owe to such kindness."
 "Nothing in it," replied the Viscount :
 "such as you are, you suit me : I esteem
 "you, I pity you, and if I deliver you up
 "to your own melancholy, you are a lost
 "man. That would be a pity ; and the
 "condition which you are in, permits me
 "not to abandon you. In a month, I quit
 "the country ; I have room for you ; and
 "whether under the title of friendship, or
 "gratitude, I insist on your accepting it."
 "Ah," said Alcestes, "that it were possi-
 "ble !" "Have you," demanded the Vis-
 "count, "any obstacle ? If your fortune were
 "out of order, I flatter myself that you are
 "not the man to blush at confessing it."
 "No," said Alcestes ; "I am richer than
 "a single person has need to be. I have ten
 "thousand crowns a year, and owe nothing.
 "But a more serious motive retains me here :
 "you shall judge of it."—"Come and sup
 "with us then, and I will disperse all these
 "clouds if I can." "You make a hydra,"
 said he to Alcestes on the road, "of the vice
 "and wickedness you have seen in the world.
 "Would you try now to what a small num-
 "ber this class of men, who terrify you, are
 "reduced ? Make out a list of them with
 1 " me

“ me this evening ; and I defy you to name
“ a hundred persons, whom you have a right
“ to hate.”—“ O heaven ! I could name a
“ a thousand.”—“ We’ll see. Remember
“ only to be just, and to establish your
“ complaints well.”—“ Nay, it is not on
“ particular facts that I judge them : but by
“ the gross of their manners. For example,
“ it is pride which I condemn in some,
“ meanness in others. I object to them,
“ the abuse of riches, of credit, of autho-
“ rity, an exclusive love of themselves, a
“ cruel insensibility to the misfortunes and
“ wants of others ; and although these vices,
“ in every stage of life have not features
“ sufficiently marked, formally to exclude
“ a man from the number of honest people,
“ they authorise me to banish him from the
“ number of those whom I esteem and love.”
“ From the instant that we talk in general,”
said the Viscount, “ we declaim as much as
“ we please ; but we render ourselves liable
“ to be unjust. Our esteem is a possession,
“ of which we are but the depositaries, and
“ which appertains of right to him who de-
“ serves it : our contempt is a punishment,
“ which it depends on us to inflict, but not
“ according to our own caprice ; and every
“ one of us, in judging of his fellow, owes
“ him the examination which he would

“require, if it were himself were to be
 “judged: for, in regard to manners, publick
 “censure is a tribunal where we all sit, but
 “to which we are also all cited; now, who
 “of us consents that we should be accused
 “there, on vague presumptions, and to be
 “condemned without proofs? Consult your
 “own heart, and see in yourself whether you
 “duly observe the first of all laws.”

Alcestes walked with his eyes cast down,
 and sighed deeply. “You have in your
 “mind,” said the Viscount, “some deep
 “wound, which I do not probe. I only
 “combat your opinions, and it is, perhaps,
 “to your sensations that I ought to apply
 “the remedy.”

On these words, they arrive at the castle
 of Laval, and whether through penetration,
 or delicacy, Ursula steals away, and leaves
 them together.

“Sir,” said Alcestes to the Viscount,
 “I am now going to talk to you as to a
 “friend of twenty years: your goodness
 “engages me, and my duty obliges me to
 “it. It is but too true, that I must re-
 “nounce what formed the consolation, and
 “the charm of my life, the pleasure of seeing
 “you, and living with you. Another man
 “would make use of circumlocution, and
 “blush to break silence; but I see nothing
 “in

“ in my misfortune which I ought to disseminate. I have not been able to see with indifference, what nature has formed the most accomplished in its kind: I confess it to Ursula’s father, and I beseech him to forget it after I have taken my leave.”

“ How,” said the Viscount, “ is this the great secret! Very well, now we have it; you are in love: is there any thing in that to make you unhappy? Ah, I would fain be so yet, and far from being ashamed, I should glory in it. Come, we must endeavour to please, to be very tender, very complaisant: we are still amiable at your age; perhaps you will be beloved.”—“ Ah, Sir, you do not understand me.”—“ Pardon me, I believe I do. You are in love with Ursula?”—“ Alas, yes, Sir.” — “ Very well, who hinders you from trying at least, if so good a heart will be touched with the feelings of your’s?” —“ What, Sir, do you authorise me! . . .” —“ Why not? Sure you think me very difficult! you have by inheritance a handsome fortune, and if my daughter consents, I do not see what can happen better.” Alcestes fell, in amaze, at the Viscount’s knees. —

“ Your goodness, Sir, overpowers me,” said he, “ but it is of no service to me.

“ Mademoiselle de Laval has declared to me, “ that a Misanthrope was her aversion : and “ this is the idea she has formed of my “ character.” — “ That does not signify : “ you will change.” — “ I cannot dissemble.” — “ You shall not ; you shall reconcile yourself to mankind, in good earnest. You “ will not be the first bear that has been “ tamed by the women.”

Supper being served up, they seated themselves at table; and never before was M. de Laval in so sprightly an humour. “ Come, “ neighbour,” said he, “ cheer up : nothing “ sets us off like spirits.” Alcestes, thus encouraged, took heart. He made the most touching eulogy on the intimate commerce of souls, whom the relish of virtue, the love of truth, the sentiment of what is just and honest, unites. “ What an attraction,” said he, “ have they for each other ! With what effusion they communicate ! What agreement, “ and what harmony they form in uniting.— “ I find here but two that are like me ; and “ they are a whole world to me. My soul is “ full, I could wish to be able to fix my existence in this delicious state, or that my “ life were a chain of incidents resembling “ this.” — “ I would lay a wager,” replied the Viscount, “ that if heaven were to take “ you

“you at your word, you will be very sorry
“not to have asked more.”—“I confess it,
“and if I were worthy of forming yet one
“wish.”—Did not I say so? Such is man.
“He has always somewhat to wish for. We
“are but three: and yet there is not one of
“us who does not wish for something: what
“say you, daughter? For my part, I confess
“I ask of heaven, with ardour, a husband
“whom you may love, and who may render
“you happy.”—“I ask also,” said she, “a
“husband, who may assist me in making you
“happy.”—“And you, Alcestes?”—“And
“I, if I durst, would ask to be that husband.”
“There now are three wishes,” said M. de
Laval, “which might easily be made one.”

I have already given some intimation, that Ursula had conceived for Alcestes an esteem and good-will: the trouble she had taken to soften his temper, proclaimed it; but it was only in this instant that she perceived how sensibly that disposition, which we must either love or hate, had touched her.

“Hey!” said her father, after a long silence, “we are all three struck dumb! That
“Alcestes, at forty, should be confused at
“having made a declaration to a lady of
“eighteen, is natural enough; that Ursula
“should blush, look down, and observe a

“modest silence, is quite natural too ; but
“I, who am but a mere confidant, why
“should I be grave ? The scene is amusing.”
—“Sir,” said Ursula, “spare me, I beseech
“you. Alcestes gives me a mark of esteem,
“of which I am very sensible : and he would
“be angry that we should make a jest of
“it ——— Would you have me believe that
“he is in earnest ?” —“I am sure of it, and
“I am obliged to him.” — “You do not
“think so. Forty ! A man of his temper.”
—“His temper should estrange him from
“all sorts of engagements, and he knows
“very well what I think of it.” —“And his
“age !” —“That is another thing ; and I
“beg you to forget age, when you choose me
“a husband.” —“Ah, child, but you are so
“young !” —“For that reason, I have need
“of a husband who is not so.” —“There is
“nothing then but this unfortunate Misan-
“thropy, which you have to object to him ;
“and I own that it is incompatible with your
“temper.” —“And more still with the plan
“which I have formed to myself.” —“And
“what is that plan ?” —“That of nature :
“to live happily with my husband, to sacri-
“fice my taste to him, if unluckily I have
“not his, to renounce all society, rather than
“deprive me of his, and not to take one step
“in

“ in the world without his counsel and consent. Judge, therefore, of what concern it is to me, that his wisdom should have nothing savage in it, and that he should be pleased with that world in which I hope to live with him.” “ Whoever he be, Mademoiselle,” replied Alcestes. “ I dare answer, that he will be pleased wherever you are.”—“ My father,” continued Ursula, “ takes a pleasure in bringing together to his suppers, a circle of genteel people, both of the city and court; I would wish my husband to be of all these suppers, I would have him in particular be agreeable.”—“ Animated with the desire of pleasing you, he will certainly do his best.”—“ I propose to myself to frequent the plays, the public walks.”—“ Alas! these were my only pleasures, there are none more innocent.”—“ Balls too are my passion. And I would have my husband carry me there.”—“ In mask, nothing is more easy,”—“ In a mask, or without a mask, just as I like.”—“ Right: that is a matter of indifference, as long as one is there with one’s wife.”—“ Nay more, I would have him dance there.”—“ Very well, Mademoiselle, I will dance there,” said Alcestes with transport, throwing himself at her feet.”—
“ Nay,”

"Nay," cried the Viscount, "there is no
 "resisting that; and since he consents to
 "dance at a ball, he will do impossibilities
 "for you."—"My lord thinks me ridiculous,
 "and he has reason, but I must complete my
 "being so. Yes, Mademoiselle, you see at
 "your feet, a friend, a lover, and since you
 "will have it so, a second father, a man, in
 "short, who renounces life, if he is not to
 "live for you." Ursula enjoyed her tri-
 umph; but it was not the triumph of vanity.
 She restored to the world, and to himself, a
 virtuous man, a useful citizen, who but for
 her had been lost. Such was the conquest
 with which she was pleased; but her silence
 was her only consent. Her eyes, timidly cast
 on the ground, dared not raise themselves to
 those of Alcestes: one of her hands only was
 suffered to drop into his, and the crimson of
 her beautiful cheeks expressed the transport
 and emotion of her heart. "Hey!" said the
 father, "you are motionless and dumb!
 "What will you say to him?"—"What-
 "ever you please."—"What I please is to
 "see him happy, provided he make my
 "daughter so."—"It is in his power: he is
 "virtuous, he reveres you, and you love
 him."—"Let us embrace then, my children.
 "This has been a happy evening, and I fore-
 "bode

“ bode well of a marriage, which is concluded
“ as in the good old times.” Take my advice,
“ my friend, continued he, “ be a man, and
“ live with mankind. It is the intention of
“ nature. She has given faults to us all, that
“ nobody may be dispensed with being indul-
“ gent to the faults of others.”

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



